

2015 ■ VOLUME 62 ■ NUMBER 1

PIONEER

Special Tribute
to Brigham
Young

Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers

PIONEER

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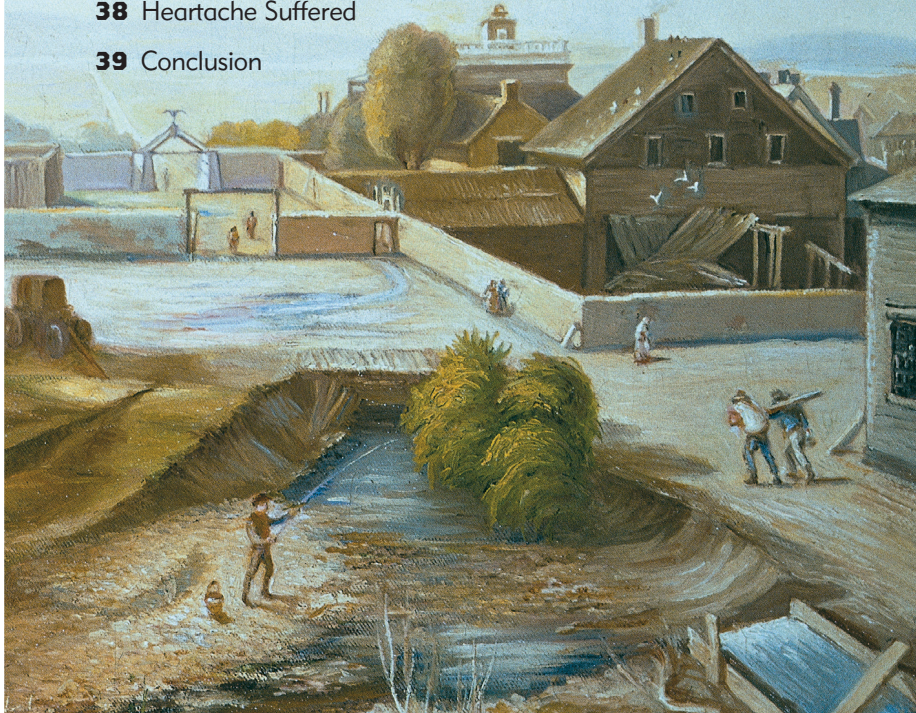
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WEBSITE:
www.sonsofuthapioneers.org

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS:
3301 East Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84109
(801) 484-4441
Email: SUP1847@comcast.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Pat Cook
Call **1-866-724-1847**. For reprints and back issues, contact SUP.
Published quarterly, **\$20** per year.

FINANCIAL: Linda Sorensen

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers is to preserve the memory and heritage of the early pioneers of the Utah Territory. We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination. The society also honors present-day pioneers worldwide in many walks of life who exemplify these same qualities of character. It is further intended to teach these qualities to the youth, who will be tomorrow's pioneers.

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BY THOMAS G. ALEXANDER



Last
month
Kent Lott
(past presi-
dent of the
Mills Chap-
ter, 2001,
and National

Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers 2005), retired as the volunteer publisher of *Pioneer* magazine. To honor his service, the Executive Council awarded him the position of publisher emeritus. Kent will continue to serve as a member of the *Pioneer* magazine committee.

Many SUP members may not realize that ultimately the publisher is responsible for the final product. Among his most important duties are working with the magazine committee: Susan Lofgren (editor-in-chief and magazine designer) and board members Linda Hunter Adams, Roger Flick, Bob Folkman, Dr. F. Charles Graves, Keith Lawrence, and Francis A. Madsen Jr.

Other duties include seeking articles and authors to write them, working with the editorial board to refine the articles and verify accuracy, working with the printer to produce and distribute the magazine, and working with various outlets to sell the magazine. In short, the publisher does virtually everything to make certain that members, subscribers, and other readers receive a quality magazine.

I mentioned to an SUP friend that we had recently released Kent

as publisher, and I commented on how beautiful the magazine looks, largely because of Susan's work. Without any prompting from me, he noted that the quality of articles had improved in recent years, coinciding almost exactly with Kent's tenure as publisher.

Linda Hunter Adams, one of the magazine committee members, wrote: "Kent is dedicated to making the magazine a success. He is concerned about the readers and works hard to make each issue interesting and exciting and new. Kent Lott is a kind, thoughtful man, who cares about people. And that has made my years of editing *Pioneer* magazine with Kent a happy and memorable part of my experiences."

Kent V. Lott was born in Twin Falls, Idaho, on July 2, 1935. He has pioneer ancestors on both parents' sides. His mother's family were early settlers of Grantsville, Utah; his father's family were pioneer settlers of Provo, Lehi, and Nephi.

He attended elementary school and high school in Hagerman, Idaho. After that, he received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Idaho in 1957. Afterward he worked as a chemical engineer for Standard Oil of California in El Segundo, California, until serving an LDS mission to the North Central States Mission from 1958 to 1960.

After his mission, Kent worked as a missile engineer for Hercules

in Magna, Utah. He met Iris Simpson of Greensboro, North Carolina, and they were married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1964. In 1966 Kent obtained employment with Monsanto Chemical in Soda Springs, Idaho, where he and Iris lived and raised their family for the next 31 years. Kent worked as a process engineer, environmental engineer, production and plant engineering supervisor, technical and environmental superintendent, and assistant plant manager. Kent and Iris were active in community, cultural, and Church responsibilities in Soda Springs.

In 1997 Kent retired from Monsanto and moved back to Salt Lake City, where he joined the Sons of Utah Pioneers. Kent and Iris are the parents of two sons and two daughters and grandparents of 20. Kent and Iris served in the Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission from 2005 to 2006. Kent is a church service missionary, serving as a docent coordinator at the Church History Museum.

The Sons of Utah Pioneers owe their undying gratitude to Kent for his service as publisher, and we wish him many happy years as publisher emeritus.

SUP would like to welcome Dr. William W. Tanner as the new publisher of *Pioneer* magazine. We appreciate his willingness to replace Kent Lott, and we look forward to the beginning of another era. ▣



Brigham Young

One of the Greatest Prophets

BY RONALD W. WALKER, *BYU History Professor Emeritus*

Heavy clouds “bowed thickly down from the skies,” said one newspaper.¹ The weather matched the Latter-day Saints’ mood.

President Brigham Young had died two days earlier. He had led the Church for 30 years. He was 76 years old, 2 months, and 28 days.

The body was taken to the Tabernacle on Temple Square. A coffin, draped with white wool cloth and wreathed with flowers, held the remains. During the next 25 hours, an estimated 25,000 people passed by.

Elder George Q. Cannon, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, spoke with great feeling at the funeral. President Young had “been the brain, the eye, the ear, the mouth and hand for the entire people of the Church,” he said. Still, the Saints did not fully appreciate how important President Young had been, said Elder Cannon. “The time will come,” he predicted, “when the Latter-day Saints will appreciate him as one of the greatest prophets that ever lived.”²

Brigham Young was born June 1, 1801, at Wittingham, Vermont, just over the Massachusetts border. He was the ninth child in a family of five boys and six girls. Shortly before his third birthday, the Young family moved to upper New York state, where their hard struggle for life continued. He remembered working as a boy and, summer and winter ill clad, with “insufficient food until my stomach would ache.”³

Brigham’s mother, Abigail [Nabby] Howe, died when the boy was 14, probably of tuberculosis. His father had the virtues of integrity, work, and love

for children, but his ways were severe. His discipline was typically “a word and a blow . . . but the blow came first.”⁴

The boy had little time for school. His primary curriculum was the Bible, read with his family around the hearth. “I went to school eleven days after I was twenty-two years old,” he said, “which was the most schooling I ever had.”⁵ When Brigham was 16 years of age, his father suggested it was time for him to earn his own living. Thereafter he clothed and fed himself.⁶

During the next dozen years, Brigham worked at a series of jobs in upstate New York. At Auburn, he helped build the village’s first market house.⁷ Later he worked on the Matson lock houses, apparently at Port Byron, just a few miles to the north.⁸ At Oswego, he was part of the crew that constructed a large tannery, and at Mendon, to the west, he established deeper roots. There he built on rented land a “nice water wheel, a turning lath, and every thing necessary for making up furniture.”⁹ By trade, he had become a handyman and craftsman.

His father and grandfather were “strict religionists.” Brigham was taught to reverence the Bible, return to neighbors something as trifling as a pin, and to render good when injured by others.¹⁰ Although he believed in a literal Bible religion, he delayed joining any denomination, despite strong pressure from Christian ministers. “Some one of you may be right,” he remembered thinking to himself, “but hold on, wait awhile! when I reach the years of judgment and discretion I can judge for myself.”¹¹

He later remembered “many anxious hours” of religious seeking. “I would have given worlds if I could have known the truth in my childhood,” he said. “I had a great desire to know it.”¹² Although he attended the religious revivals in his neighborhood, he was unsatisfied. These revivals seemed to make the people “crazy” with emotion, he said, but when the camp meetings were over, it was “all about nothing at all.”¹³

He finally joined the Methodists at the age of 23, but it was with uncertainty and on his own terms. He consented to baptism in the hope he might “lead a better life,” he said. At his request he was baptized by immersion, although the local Methodist elders did not favor the form.¹⁴

When reaching the age of almost 30, he found himself deeply frustrated. “I hated the world, and the things of the world, and the poor miserable devils that were governing it,” he remembered. During these years, he felt “gloomy and desponding.” Everything had “a dreary aspect.” He felt that he could “scarcely trust any one.”¹⁵ A modern clinician, if he had been present, might have diagnosed him with a case of severe depression.

Then he found Mormonism. He had first heard about Joseph Smith and the Golden Plates from rumors in the neighborhood (Mendon was less than 20 miles from Smith’s home), but he didn’t pay much attention until he met a pair of Mormon missionaries. He remembered them as “the most illiterate men that I knew,” yet a fire gradually began to kindle within him. Their “testimony was like fire in my bones.”¹⁶ Brigham studied the Book of Mormon and became convinced.

He was baptized on Sunday, April 14, 1832, in his own mill stream and immediately was ordained an elder. His despon-

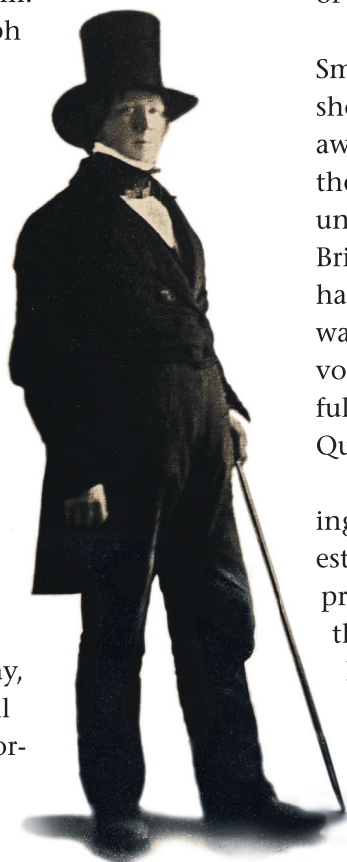
dency lifted. It was as though he had been given a new life. He would say many times later that his real life began with his baptism.¹⁷

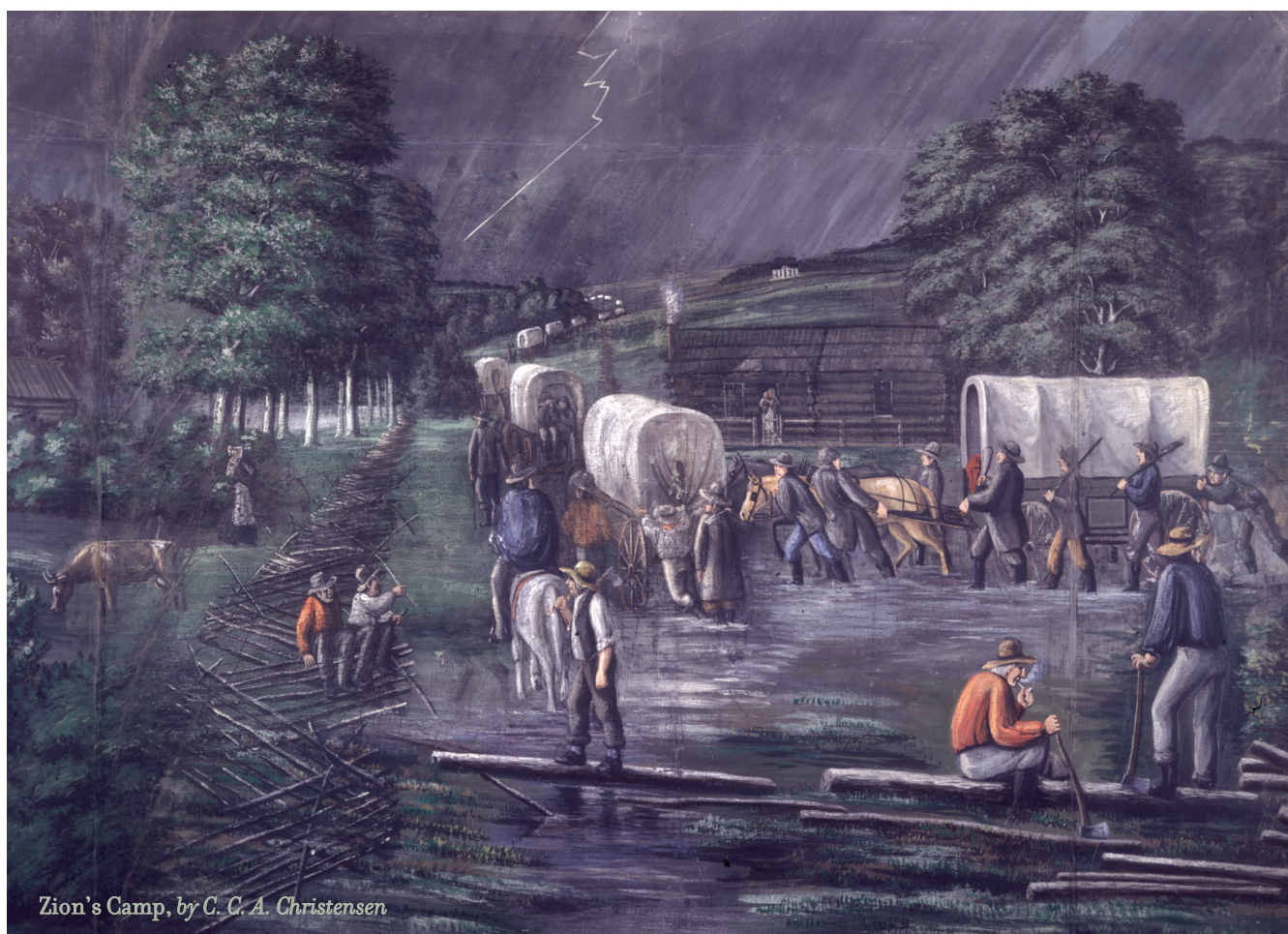
Soon Brigham was in Kirtland, Ohio, to begin a remarkable, 11-year relationship with Joseph Smith, 1833–1844. During this stage of the convert’s life, he matured as he accepted the Prophet’s direction and filled a series of important church assignments. These included marching in Zion’s Camp, accepting the call to serve as a latter-day Apostle, and helping build the Kirtland temple. Several years later President Young directed the Saints’ forced evacuation from Missouri, led the Twelve Apostles’ mission to England, and, under the direction of Joseph Smith, played a leadership role in Nauvoo, Illinois. Smith increasingly saw him as his right-hand man.

When Brigham Young began to lead the Church, he was 43 years old. Many men and women, including himself, wondered if he had the talent and background to lead the Church.¹⁸ It was soon clear, however, he was no ordinary man. He had the ability to grasp both small and large details and then to make great things happen. Some of his contributions include the following:

Determining Succession. The death of Joseph Smith in 1844 left most Saints wondering who should be the new leader. While the Twelve were aware that Joseph Smith had conferred on them the “keys of the kingdom,” even they seemed unsure how to proceed. Into this vacuum stepped Brigham Young. Responding to a revelation that had come to him “like a clap of hands” while he was preaching in the East,¹⁹ He returned to Nauvoo on August 6, 1844. Two days later, he successfully argued before the assembled Saints that the Quorum of the Twelve should guide the Church.

As important was the precedent of reorganizing the First Presidency, which President Young established three years later. Some of the Apostles preferred the cumbersome procedure of having the Twelve make each executive decision. But President Young understood that such a system was not a long-term solution. During the summer and fall of 1847, he worked to convince his fellow Apostles of the need for a First





Zion's Camp, by C. C. A. Christensen

Presidency and brought the matter to a head in December. On December 5, the Quorum unanimously accepted his proposal.²⁰

Evacuating Nauvoo. After Joseph Smith was killed, mobs tried to expel the Saints from Illinois. Another leader might have defended Mormon rights by using the Nauvoo Legion, the well-trained local militia of perhaps five thousand troops. “We would fight our way clear,” an LDS editorial noted the Legion’s military power. But “we will suffer wrong rather than do wrong. . . . The gospel whispers peace.”²¹ Instead of becoming embroiled in bloodshed and escalating violence, President Young and the Saints left their homes and started west.

Preserving the Church in Iowa. From the start of the Saints’ evacuation of Nauvoo, which began in February 1846, the Saints had difficulty. Poor roads, bad weather, mud, scant supplies, and disobedient Church members seemed to

threaten the very existence of the Church. During this crisis, President Young remembered sleeping with “one eye open and one foot out of bed.”²² A tight-fitting coat that President Young had worn in Nauvoo soon lapped over his waist by twelve inches.²³ But because of his energy, firmness, good humor, and organizing skill, President Young may have saved Mormonism from disintegrating on the Iowa plains.

Choosing a Place for Settlement. The Mormon pioneers might have settled in Oregon or California, which had the most fertile land. Instead, President Young wanted a region that others did not covet and therefore had not settled in, where “we have killed the snakes and made the roads.”²⁴ Such a place might allow the Saints to keep “the commandments of God without being persecuted and driven by mobs.”²⁵ After studying maps, exploring reports, emigrant guides, and travelers’ accounts, and seeking spiritual guidance,²⁶



President Young chose the Salt Lake Valley. Another choice would have made the history of the Church a great deal different.

Establishing Community Ideals. On August 22, 1847, a month after arriving in the West, President Young and Elder Heber C. Kimball formally asked the Saints some important questions. Were the new settlers going to be motivated by narrow personal profit? Or were the Saints willing to act as a group and help each other?

In response, the Saints formally pledged to serve each “man, woman, and child” and not simply themselves. They also agreed to settle on the land in a pattern that became known as the “Mormon Village.” The plan had originally been Joseph Smith’s, but now President Young implemented it. Homes and gardens were placed on village lots, small agricultural fields and livestock were nurtured several miles away, and the Saints played, learned, and worshiped together as a community. The ideals of the Mormon village—unity, cooperation, and neighborliness—became a part

of the “Mormon pioneer way” and continue in today’s LDS congregations.²⁷

Gathering Church Members to Zion. The celebrated 17th-century “Puritan Migration” brought to New England more than 20,000 souls. In contrast, during President Young’s leadership, three and a half times that number arrived in Utah, mainly from the British isles and northern Europe. A large number of LDS emigrants needed financial help, which President Young and the Church provided. In this undertaking, President Young set the example by donating his own means and, to further show his support, at times greeted newcomers as they arrived in Utah. The LDS system of getting the Saints to Zion, which President Young supervised, has been described as “the largest and most successful group immigration in United States history.”²⁸

Zion-Building. During President Young’s leadership, about 360 towns were established, mainly in the American West. This led one authority to declare that the Mormon leader “as a colonizer

has no peer in American history.”²⁹ However, Brigham Young was more than founder of towns and cities; he sought to transform lives. He wanted every man, woman, and child busily employed and learning. But he also urged the Saints to relax and enjoy such things as drama and music. “There is no music in hell, for all good music belongs to heaven,”³⁰ he said.

President Young set a personal example. His office journal, kept after the Saints arrived in Utah, reveals how wide ranging his interests became. He was interested in the microscope and the telescope, and he studied phonography (today we would say “stenography”). He learned about smelting and iron-making. On other occasions, President Young and other Church leaders gathered in his office to discuss such things as naval armaments, Nevada statehood, national politics, the making of molasses, or the production of rosin and turpentine.³¹

Preaching the Gospel. By using such 19th-century rhetorical devices as anecdotes, dialogue, humor, repetition, and exaggerated language, he sought to gain attention of the Latter-day Saints so that his spiritual message might be heard. President Heber J. Grant, who as a young boy had often heard President Young preach, believed the pioneer prophet’s “wonderful capacity . . . to inspire those who heard him preach” was perhaps his greatest contribution to the Church.³²

Counseling the Saints. Despite his sometimes chastising words, a bond grew between the Church leader and the Saints. Why did the people love him? he asked during a sermon. The reason was that he loved them so deeply.³³ He enjoyed mingling with the people when touring the outlying settlements. On these occasions, he and other Church leaders might speak 30 or 40 times during a single month. In addition, these “tours” gave President Young the opportunity to meet informally with the Church members, “encouraging, motivating, and informing the people, listening to them and learning from them, and blessing them.”³⁴ Thousands of letters passed between the Saints and their leader, and still more thousands of men and women came to his Salt Lake City office for advice. No Saint and no personal matter seemed too unimportant.

Administering the Kingdom. President Young thought the task of administering the affairs of the Kingdom was “one of the simplest things in the world.” We “teach the people true knowledge,” he said, paraphrasing Joseph Smith, “and they will govern themselves.”³⁵ For his own part, he led his people with a deep sense of providence. “I tremble not, I fear not, neither do I care for the insults of the world, for the Lord is my bulwark,”³⁶ he said. It was his rule “to live so as to know my business and understand my duty, and to do it at the moment without a long study.”³⁷ While he made decisions slowly and seemed in no hurry to act, once “the time of action arrived,” French observer Jules Remy said President Young worked “with an energy which stops only at success.”³⁸

Reorganizing the Church. During President Young’s final year, he completed what one historian has called “the single most important priesthood analysis and redirecting since the priesthood restorations of forty-eight years earlier.” For instance, to the existing 101 wards, President Young and other Church leaders added another 140. Sixteen new stake presidents were called, as seven new stakes were added to the existing 13. He also wanted to enable members of the Quorum of Twelve, six of whom had presided over stakes, to assume a larger role in Church administration.³⁹ “With plainness and distinction and power,” President Young defined the correct duties of the Apostles, seventies, high priests, and elders.⁴⁰ Finally, in 1877, President Young presided over the dedication of the St. George temple. In establishing the first House of the Lord since Nauvoo, he was able to set in order “the priesthood and the ordinances for the redemption of the dead.” He thus realized “one of the greatest objects of his life.”⁴¹

Once President Young compared life to the theater and to the succession of actors who performed on the stage. “One generation passes away and another comes on to occupy their places,” he said. Until meeting in “our Father’s Mansions,” he hoped that, likewise, he and the Saints would “act well our parts” so that in the theater of life “we may draw down the applause of him who rules, directs, and governs.”⁴² He had done so, and it remains for the rest of us to do our best to follow his example. ▼

1 *Deseret Evening News*, Sept. 1, 1877, p. 2. This article is adapted from one published as Ronald W. Walker, "It Never Was a Sacrifice," *Ensign* 29 (Jan. 1999): 50–57.

2 *Deseret Evening News*, Sept. 3, 1877, p. 2.

3 Brigham Young Sermons, Aug. 2, 1857; Oct. 8, 1868; and July 19, 1877, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86) [hereafter *JD*]: 5:97, 12:287, and 19:74.

4 BY Sermon, Oct. 5, 1856, *JD* 4:112.

5 BY Sermons, Nov. 11, 1867, Thirteenth Ward, *Deseret News Weekly* 16:325; and Oct. 3, 1852, Salt Lake Tabernacle, *Millennial Star* 16:593–97.

6 BY Sermons, Oct. 3, 1852, SL Tabernacle, *Millennial Star* 16:593–97; and Nov. 12, 1864, *JD* 10:360.

7 Brigham Young to Brigham Young Jr., June 5, 1862, Brigham Young Letterbook, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church History Library [hereafter CHL].

8 Brigham Young to Ezekiel A. King, Sept. 21, 1866, Young Letterbook, 9.

9 BY Sermon, Mar. 30, 1856, SL Tabernacle, ms, CHL.

10 BY Sermon, Aug. 15, 1852, *JD* 6:290.

11 BY Sermons, July 24, 1877, *JD* 19:65; and May 7, 1871, *JD* 14:112.

12 BY Sermons, Aug. 9, 1857, *JD* 5:127; July 24, 1877, *JD* 19:65; also see July 18, 1869, *JD* 13:58.

13 BY Sermon, April 9, 1871, *JD* 14:90.

14 BY Sermons, June 3, 1871, *JD* 14:197; and Oct. 6, 1870, *JD* 13:267.

15 BY Sermons, Aug. 24, 1867, Provo, ms, CHL; April 20, 1856, *JD* 3:320–21; and BY Sermon, May 17, 1868, *JD* 12:217.

16 BY Sermon, July 28, 1861, SLC, *JD* 9:141.

17 BY Sermons, April 7, 1850, SLC, *Millennial Star* 1:273–76; and May 5, 1861, SLC, ms, CHL.

18 BY Sermon, Mar. 23, 1856, SLC, *JD* 3:276.

19 General Church Minutes, Feb. 12, 1849, CHL.

20 General Church Minutes, Dec. 5, 1847.

21 John Taylor, *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Oct. 29, 1845.

22 Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor, Jan. 6, 1847, Young Letterbook.

23 *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, ed. Elden J. Watson (Salt Lake City: By the Author, 1971), May 3, 1846, 151.

24 BY Sermon, 2 Jan. 1846, in Heber C. Kimball Journal, ms, CHL.

25 Brigham Young to Nathaniel H. Felt, Nov. 24[?], 1847, Young Letterbook.

26 *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1952), 7:548, 555, 558, Dec. 20, 27, 31, 1845; and George A. Smith Sermon, June 20, 1869, SLC, *JD* 13:85.

27 General Church Minutes, Aug. 22, 1847. For an edited report, see Howard R. Egan, *Pioneer of the West, 1846–1878* (Richmond, UT: Howard R. Egan Estate, 1917), 126.

28 Maldwyn A. Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960), 126; Ray A. Billington, "The Best Prepared Pioneers in the West," *American Heritage* 7 (Oct. 1956): 20–25, 116–17.

29 Milton R. Hunter, *Brigham Young, the Colonizer* (Independence, MI: Zion's Printing & Publishing Co., 1945), 358.

30 BY Sermon, Mar. 6, 1862, SLC, *JD* 9:244.



31 A single entry may capture the spirit of this discussion, Brigham Young Office Journal, Nov. 27, 1855, CHL.

32 Heber J. Grant to Susa Young Gates, Mar. 16, 1927, Heber J. Grant Letterbooks, CHL.

33 BY Sermons, Mar. 4, 1852, and April 9, 1852, both SLC, *JD* 1:33 and 1:49.

34 Leonard J. Arrington and Ronald K. Esplin, "Building a Commonwealth: The Secular Leadership of Brigham Young," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (summer 1977): 222.

35 BY Sermons, Aug. 9, 1868, and May 31, 1863, both SLC, *JD* 12:257 and *JD* 10:190.

36 BY Sermon, April 29, 1877, SLC, *JD* 19:4.

37 BY Sermon, Nov. 13, 1870, SLC, *JD* 13:308.

38 Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake-City* (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 497.

39 William G. Hartley, "The Priesthood Reorganization of 1877: Brigham Young's Last Achievement," *BYU Studies* 20 (fall 1979): 36, 3–36.

40 George Q. Cannon, *Deseret News Weekly*, Sept. 3, 1877.

41 Erastus Snow, *Deseret Evening News*, Sept. 3, 1877, p. 2.

42 Brigham Young to Philip B. Lewis, B. F. Johnson, et al., Jan. 30, 1855, Young Letterbook.

Brother Brigham

BY CHAD M. ORTON, *Curator at the Church History Department, SLC*

An 1860 visit to Salt Lake City prompted a *New York Herald* reporter to write, “Strange world, strange folks!” His conclusion was based not so much upon doctrine but upon what he observed at a local dance—Brigham Young casually intermingling with ordinary Latter-day Saints. In most cases, the amazed reporter noted, “Such familiarity” between a leader and his followers would “be fatal to great claims.”¹

Throughout history men have risen to power by force and largely maintained their control by keeping themselves aloof from those over whom they held sway to ensure a certain mystique and air of superiority. While it was widely proclaimed that Brigham was a ruthless despot who ruled through intimidation and fear, what the reporter observed flew in the face of both

The Kanesville Tabernacle in Council Bluffs, Iowa was where Brigham Young was sustained as the second president and prophet of the Church.



conventional wisdom and popular perception. Brigham's power, the reporter discovered, resulted from the fact that the Latter-day Saints loved, not feared, him. A decade later, Charles Marshall likewise observed: "There can be no question that Brigham Young is both revered and beloved by the mass of the people."² Like Joseph Smith before him, Brigham did not claim to be greater than his followers, but simply a fellow servant of God. John Hyde, an outspoken critic of Brigham, concluded that "the whole secret of Brigham's influence lies in his real sincerity. Brigham may be a great man, greatly deceived, but he is not a hypocrite. . . . For the sake of his religion, he has over and over again left his family, confronted the world, endured hunger, come back poor, made wealth and given it to the Church. . . . No holiday friend nor summer prophet, he has shared their trials as well as their prosperity."³

As with Joseph, the Saints honored Brigham with a unique combination of familiarity and reverence that was reflected in the way they lovingly referred to him: "Brother Brigham."

This warm relation was in spite of Brigham's public and harsh rebukes. Few individuals have dared to publicly speak to and about others as he did. "Although I may get up here and cuff them [the Latter-day Saints] about, chastising them for their forgetfulness, their weaknesses and follies, yet I have not seen a moment when they did not love

me. The reason is," he proclaimed in 1852, "because I love them so well."⁴ For Brigham, his rebukes were evidence he hadn't given up on them and they shouldn't give up on themselves. While he reproved with sharpness, he also afterwards regularly showed forth

an increase of love as the scriptures command (see D&C 121:43–44). "There is not a soul I chasten but what I feel as though I could take them in and put them in my bosom and carry them with me day by day." On one occasion he noted, "Though I may sometimes chastise my brethren, and speak to them in the language of reproof, there is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people."⁵

The kind side claimed by Brigham was noted by a newspaper reporter in 1876: "President Brigham Young addressed the assembled concourse in a kind, fatherly and instructive manner, his words and the feeling that prompted them going direct to the hearts of his hear-

ers. At the conclusion of his brief discourse he blessed the people, every one in his place and station, in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the priesthood he holds, according to his right and privilege."⁶

The Latter-day Saints were willing to make the heavy sacrifices he asked of them for they knew he understood the "cost of discipleship." The Saints knew that Brigham had "been there, done that" and that he was personally aware of the struggles, the sacrifices, the kingdom required. When Brigham proclaimed in



Though I may sometimes chastise my brethren, and speak to them in the language of reproof, there is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people."

September 1844 that he had “traveled these many years, in the midst of poverty and tribulation, and that, too, with blood in my shoes, month after month, to sustain and preach this Gospel and build up this kingdom,” they knew he was telling the truth.⁷ He likewise knew the price involved with the gathering and having to start over more than once. “I have left my home five times, and a good handsome property each time,” he told them.⁸ They responded to his varied calls, from planting sugar beets to going on foreign missions, because of his example. “I ask not that of my brethren but what I am willing to give myself,” he proclaimed, “and what I do as your leader, or president, you should be willing to do the same.”⁹

Brigham believed that “example is the best method of preaching.”¹⁰ The Saints knew him as a walking sermon who practiced what he preached. His attitude was “Come, boys,” not “Go, boys.”¹¹ When he stated, “I expect that if I should see a wagon in the mud, my shoulder would be the first to the wheel to lift it out,” the Saints knew he meant it.¹² When a ferry was needed during the journey of the 1847 vanguard company to Utah, “Prest. Young stript himself and went to work with all his strength” and led out in making “a first rate White Pine and white Cotton Wood Raft.”¹³ The following year on his second journey to Utah, Brigham crossed and re-crossed the North Platte to make certain that all were safely across.¹⁴ During an 1864 journey, Brigham and his party came across “an old gentleman with a heavier load than his team could pull over a bad place on the road.” Upon seeing him, Brigham “stepped out of the carriage, and with a wave of his hand cried out, ‘Come on,

boys, let’s help this good old farmer out of his troubles.”¹⁵

The Saints were used to Brigham’s undertaking things most leaders left to others, but outsiders were amazed at what they saw. A stranger approached Brigham while he was on the steps of his carriage loading his luggage. “Is Governor Young in this carriage?” he asked. “No, sir,” Brigham replied, “but he is on the steps of it.”¹⁶ Elizabeth Kane noted that during a journey she and her husband, Colonel Thomas L. Kane, made with Brigham he personally inspected “every wheel, axle, horse and mule, and suit of harness belonging to the party” to make sure they were in good condition.¹⁷ When the reporter for *New York Herald* attended an annual twenty-fourth of July celebration in the mountains, he was amazed to observe that after almost everyone had started for home, a solitary figure went from campfire to campfire to make certain “all fires were extinguished.”¹⁸ It was Brigham, practicing what he preached about being a good steward.

Brigham showed great concern for the Saints as individuals. At Winter Quarters he reminded the Saints that their temple covenants had application to the poor who had not yet



reached that location. “Let the fire of the covenant which you made in the House of the Lord burn in your hearts, like flame unquenchable till you . . . [can] go straightway and bring a load of the poor from Nauvoo . . . [for] this is a day of action.”¹⁹ Later, during the rescue of the stranded 1856 handcart companies, he stated: “Were I to answer my own feelings, I should do so by undertaking to do what the conference voted I should not do, that is, I should be with them now in the snow.”²⁰ In the aftermath of the tragedy, he took into his home many of those who needed the most care and visited others who had gone through the ordeal. Thirteen-year-old Mary Goble Pay, a member of the Hunt wagon company, lost her mother and two sisters on the journey and suffered from a bad case of frostbite that required the amputation of her toes. The day after the company reached Salt Lake, Brigham visited the family. Mary reported that “he shook hands with us all. When he saw our condition—our feet frozen and our mother dead—tears rolled down his cheeks.”²¹

During the early days in the valley, a correspondent reported that Brigham could be seen all day, every day, chopping wood, working in his garden, building houses, etc. The story is told that Jedediah M. Grant sought Brigham out on a public matter and found the President of the Church/Governor of the Territory shingling a roof. Brigham told him to come back in the evening. Grant replied: “Now,

Brother Brigham, don’t you think it is time you quit pounding nails and spending your time in work like this? We have many carpenters but only one Governor and one President of the Church. The people need you more than they need a good carpenter.” Brigham reportedly came down off the roof and seldom thereafter spent his days in manual labor. Instead he “travelled and counselled, projected industry, watched over emigration, considered the claims of the people and gave himself heart and soul to the ministration to which he had been called and appointed. But he loved the honest labour of hand as well as brain and always honored those who toiled to make life a joyous reality.”²²

Each year Brigham made a visit to the outlying settlements, which allowed him to strengthen the Saints and to see what had been done and what needed to be done. These trips were necessary for efficient planning, evaluation and communication and as a means to bless and counsel the Saints and to build the spiritual unity necessary to build the kingdom. They also provided him grassroot contact with those whom he called upon to make great sacrifices. He did not wish either distance or changing circumstances to separate him from the Saints. One reporter concluded that “without these visits the people might become narrowed up in their feelings and sectional.”²³ He further noted that “a visit from the Presidency



Brigham Young and party camped on the Colorado plateau, 1870.*

and Twelve is refreshing to the officers and people. They partake of the spirit which prevails at head-quarters and can better keep pace with their brethren who reside there."²⁴

Brigham's journey through the settlements required great strength and effort, regularly taking a month or more to complete. In each town he was greeted by banners and parades, feasts and dances. Concerning one of his early trips he wrote that he spent his time "instructing, comforting and blessing the Saints, selecting new locations, forming acquaintances with and striving to promote peace among the different bands of Indians; and, by the blessings of heaven, accomplished all we could reasonably anticipate."²⁵ Eighteen years later, his report was a little more frivolous: "Our visit and travels have proved of great mutual advantage.

... [The time was spent] teaching, counseling and exhorting the Saints in the various settlements, doing all the good, and the very least portion of harm we possibly could"—counsel he frequently gave local leaders.²⁶ When he returned to Salt Lake, people gathered in the street to welcome him back.

In addition to formal meetings, Brigham also held an "open house" in each settlement for any who wished to meet with him. Elizabeth Kane reported that "at these informal audiences, reports, complaints, and petitions were made; and I think I gathered more of the actual working of Mormonism by listening to them than from any other source. They talked away to Brigham Young about every conceivable matter, from the fluxing of an ore to the advantages

of a Navajo bit, and expected him to remember every child in every cotter's family. And he really seemed to do so, and to be at home, and be rightfully deemed infallible on every subject. I think he must make fewer mistakes than most

popes, from his being in such constant intercourse with his people. I noticed that he never seemed uninterested, but gave an unforced attention to the person addressing him, which suggested a mind free from care. I used to fancy that he wasted a great deal of power in this way; but I soon saw that he was accumulating it."²⁷

Brigham gave special attention to children. He answered their questions, listened to their stories, and gave them small gifts such as marbles. His concern for the children even prompted him to ask the bishops to see that there was a "swing in each ward

for the benefit of children."²⁸

On one of his journeys one of Erastus Snow's young daughters spied Brigham cleaning his dentures. After he quickly replaced his teeth, the young girl excitedly plead, "Oh, Brother Brigham, show me your teeth! Show me your teeth, Brother Brigham!" He responded to her curiosity by taking them out so she could examine them.²⁹ On another occasion Brigham held one of Anson Call's young daughters on his knee during a visit to her family home. During a lull in the conversation, Brigham started to tell her how pretty she was, when the child blurted out, "Your eyes look just like our sow's!" Taking the child by the hand, Brigham stated: "Take me to the pig pen. I want to see this pig that has eyes just



Taking the child by the hand, Brigham stated: "Take me to the pig pen. I want to see this pig that has eyes just like mine."

like mine.” When the story was later retold, Brigham laughed as much as anyone.³⁰

Another thing that endeared Brigham was his lack of pretension. Shortly after Daniel W. Jones reached Salt Lake City, Edmund Ellsworth wanted to take him to visit Brigham: “I asked him to wait until I changed my clothes. This he would not allow, but insisted I should go as I was, adding that Brother Brigham did not judge a man by his dress. I went and can say I was completely won by President Young’s manner. He asked me a great many questions, and I was satisfied that he did not doubt my sincerity.”³¹ Elizabeth Kane was “amused” at Brigham’s “odd appearance” on one of his annual journeys to the outlying settlements in which he wore “a great surtout, reaching almost to his feet, of dark-green cloth . . . lined with fur, a fur collar, cap, and pair of sealskin boots with the undyed fur outward” and “a hideous pair of green goggles.”³²

“What made me love Joseph so?” Brigham once asked. Answering his own question, he noted that Joseph had “never spared any pains to do me good. I knew when my hand met his that he would lay down his life for me.”³³ The Latter-day Saints loved “Brother Brigham” for much the same reason. ▼

Chapter from Chad M. Orton and William W. Slaughter, Forty Ways to Look at Brigham Young: A New Approach to a Remarkable Man, Ph. D. diss, 2008.

1 *Millennial Star* 22 (Nov. 3, 1860): 701.

2 Charles Marshall, “Salt Lake City and the Valley Settlements,” *Fraser’s Magazine*, July 1871, 107.

3 John Hyde, “Mormonism, Its Leaders and Designs,” 154, as included in Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City* (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 500–501.

4 *Journal of Discourses*, 1:33, Mar. 4, 1852; hereafter cited as *JD*.

5 *JD*, 9:125, Feb. 17, 1861; *JD*, 1:49, April 9, 1852.

6 *Deseret News*, July 24, 1876.

7 *Millennial Star* 5 (Dec. 1844): 100.

8 *JD*, 13:318, April 17, 1870,

9 *Millennial Star* 12 (April 8, 1850): 276.

10 *JD*, 11:130, Aug. 1865.

11 Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1930), 212.

12 *JD*, 16:113, June 27, 1873.

13 Manuscript History, June 16, 1847.

14 *Mormon Chronicle*, 1:39.

15 Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 309.

16 *JD*, 1:104, May 8, 1853.

17 Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes: Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona*, ed. Everett L. Cooley (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, Univ. of Utah Library, 1974 [1874]), 5.

18 *Millennial Star* 22 (Nov. 3, 1860): 702.

19 Journal History, Sept. 28, 1846.

20 *JD*, 4:62, Nov. 2, 1856.

21 Christine Bowers, Virginia Pierce, and Patricia Stokes, “Angels Shall Minister unto You: Mary Goble Pay,” in *Women of Faith*, vol. 2, ed. Richard Turley and Brittany Chapman (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012).

22 Gates and Widstoe, *Brigham Young*, 212.

23 As published in Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1937), 440.

24 *Millennial Star* 30 (Oct. 10, 1868): 643.

25 *Millennial Star* 15 (Feb. 19, 1853): 113–14.

26 Brigham Young to Horace Eldredge, Feb. 16, 1871.

27 Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes*, 101.

28 Historian’s Office Journal, Aug. 13, 1854, Church History Library.

29 Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1971), 601.

30 Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses*, 308.

31 Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years among the Indians* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1890), 43–44.

32 Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes*, 5.

33 General Church Minutes, Mar. 8, 1847, Church History Library.

The Deseret News of July 29, 1857, page 5, reported the following:

The 24th of July in the Tops of the Mountains

On Wednesday the 22d inst., numerous teams could be seen wending their way by the different routes to the mouth of big Cottonwood Canyon, the company being privileged to camp for that night at any points below the gate in the canyon. On the 23d. Prest. Brigham Young led the van of the long line of carriages and wagons, which easily passed up the now comparatively smooth ascent . . . and began to reach the camp ground at the Lake at about 11:00 a.m. By good time in the afternoon all the company . . . were encamped and busily engaged in their several arrangements for the morrow.

Of this event and the days leading up to it, Brigham Young wrote in his diary the following.

"Monday 20

Spent the principle part of the day in making arrangements for the 24 inst. visiting with family etc. took an airing. Sealed a wife to my Brother John Young this evening, very few calls today upon business.

"Tuesday 21

Spent in doing buisness receiveing calls upon buisness ect. Evening completed arrangements for 24.

"Wednesday 22

Spent forenoon doing buisness ect. Afternoon hitched & Started for Canyon, camped

at Mill C. went by bro littles. Bros Kimball Wells Carrington, and others of the brethren were in company.

"Thursday 23

Started and at [blank] A.M. arrived at camp ground near the Lake. Spent the afternoon in preparation for the morrow. a great many trout were caught in the Lake. a great many people arrived Some hours behind me. Mem. For futher particulars See 'Deseret News': of 29 inst.

"Friday 24 July 1857

This day 10 years ago the pioneers entered Salt Lake valley after a pilgrimage and Search of nearly two years to find a place where the people of God might rest from persecutions for a short time. How cheering were the prospects on that day. They had at last reached a place 800 Miles from where a Settlement could approach them. The country was so barren that none would covet it. 500 of our best men had marched 3000 miles to conquer a title for it. And on every Side were Scores of miles of mountains, which must be past ere our Settlement could be approached. Here we have



DIARY ENTRY

dwelt in peace and prosperity. The lord has blessed the earth for our sakes. And the 'Desert' has 'truly blossomed as the rose.' All was hilarity and mirth the morning guns had been fired 3 round in honore of the first presidency—three times three groans were uttered for My-souri—the guards my son John W.'s company had been paraded, three 'rounds' for the hope of Isreal."

Monument:

The First Statewide Pioneer Day Celebration—Brighton, Utah

Location: Outside the Silver Lake Information Center in Brighton, Utah.

Inscription reads: Was held in this basin July 23–24, 1857. Headed by Brigham Young, the company reaching here July 23d numbered 2,587 persons, with 464 carriages & wagons, 1,028 horses & mules, and 332 oxen & cows. A program of addresses, six brass bands, singing and dancing, was punctuated by salutes from a brass howitzer. U.S. flags were flown from two highest peaks and two highest trees, the flag tree in front of Brigham Young's campsite being 70 feet N.W. of here. At noon July 24, Judson Stoddard and A. O. Smoot, 20 days from the states, with Elias Smith and O. P. Rockwell, arrived with news of the advance of Johnson's army against the "Mormons." The company returned in orderly formation July 25th.

Erected July 24, 1932, Utah Pioneer Trails and Landmarks Association; LDS Cottonwood Stake. 📌

A Man of God and a Good Kind Father Brigham Young **AT HOME**

BY DEAN C. JESSEE,

BYU History Professor Emeritus; and editor with the Joseph Smith Papers

On January 31, 1857, Brigham Young walked into the Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City and gave instructions that he wanted very little about his family included in the history of the Church.¹ His reticence no doubt stemmed from people's curiosity about the Mormon leader's polygamous lifestyle, which subjected his family to an inordinate amount of scrutiny and ridicule in the public press. Consequently, during his lifetime, the story of Brigham Young's family remained largely untold. Even now, the literature about Brigham Young focuses disproportionately on his public life, his accomplishments as Church President,

Beehive and Lion Houses, ca. 1878.

colonizer, governor of Utah Territory, superintendent of Indian affairs, and businessman. But in addition to these responsibilities, he was the patriarch of probably the largest family of any public figure in the history of the United States. . . .

During the years plural marriage was practiced by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham's family consisted of 56 wives and 57 children. Sixteen of his wives bore his 26 sons and 31 daughters. He had no children with nine other wives, for whom he provided homes, support for their children from prior marriages, and an inheritance.² Two of the women divorced him, one in 1851 and the other in 1876. He exchanged eternity-only vows with 31 others who were not connubial wives. Many of these women received his support—some of them widows much older than he, such as Phebe Morton,

the mother of his wife Mary Ann Angell; and Abigail Marks, the mother of his first wife, Miriam Works. . . . In 1850, Brigham Young told New York newspaper editor Horace Greeley, "Some of those sealed to me are old ladies whom I regard rather as mothers than Wives, but whom I have taken home to cherish and support."³ Seven of these 31, whose vows applied not for time but for eternity only, later asked for and received releases from their sealing.⁴

The sizable dimensions of his family extended far beyond anything he may have imagined at the time of his marriage to Miriam Works in Aurelius, New York, in 1824. His family with Miriam was rather small for its day.



Two children were born to the couple before Miriam contracted tuberculosis and died in 1832. Thereafter, his domestic world would unfold in a context of unstable living conditions.

The same year Miriam died, Brigham was converted to Mormonism, and three years later, he was appointed to the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Six more children were added to his family following his marriage to Mary Ann Angell in 1834. As a committed Apostle and diligent supporter of Joseph Smith, Brigham rose to the pinnacle of Church leadership within a decade. Demands upon his time and resources and the several moves that took the Church from New York to the

Salt Lake Valley placed a heavy burden upon his household.

Prior to his leading the Mormon migration to the Rocky Mountains in 1847 he had established successive homes in five states.

A major shift in the constitution of his family came in 1842 when he was introduced to the principle of plural marriage by Joseph Smith—a principle that tested Brigham

Young severely. None "could have been more adverse to it than I was," he stated.⁵ "If any man had asked me what was my choice when Joseph revealed that doctrine, . . . I would have said, 'Let me have but one wife'; . . . It was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time. And when I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation, and to regret that I was not in the coffin."⁶ But he became convinced that God required him to enter the practice, and by the time he settled in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848 he had exchanged marital vows with 43 women and fathered 18 children.

This enlarged family and Brigham Young's many church duties restricted the time he

was able to spend with his children. During the pre-Utah years, Brigham had been absent from his family for extended periods 11 times on Church proselytizing missions and other assignments, including a sojourn of nearly two years in England. In 1838–39, following the extermination order banishing the Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri, Brigham Young supervised the exodus of the Church from that state in the absence of the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders, who were imprisoned.

After Brigham's return from England, he took comfort in a revelation that informed him, "It is no more required at your hand to leave your family," and commanded him to take "especial care" of them "from this time, henceforth and forever" (D&C 126:1, 3). His ability to fulfill the revelation was severely taxed when the migration of the Saints from Illinois to the Salt Lake Valley created another major disruption for his family that lasted more than two years. Church and civic responsibilities during his Utah years would continue to limit his family time throughout the remainder of his life.

Despite these challenges, home was never absent from Brigham Young's consciousness. The welfare of his family was a constant concern.⁷ From Philadelphia in 1843 he wrote to Mary Ann, "There is no place like home to me." And while leading the pioneer company west in 1847 he commented, "I due [*sic*] think the Lord has blest me with one of [the] best famelyes that eney man ever had on the Earth." Later the same year he lamented to another of his wives, "O that I had my famely here." He said that he would "rather be annihilated" than be deprived of his family. And his daughter Susa heard him say that if he failed in his family responsibilities he would arise in the morning of the Resurrection "to find that he had failed in everything."⁸ It was this strong sense of mission that guided Brigham Young's words and actions as a committed and dedicated parent. ▣



Miriam Works

The Family Moved West

The movement of Brigham Young's family from Illinois to the Great Basin during the Mormon exodus of 1846–48 was an epic within an epic. Prior to 1846 Brigham had married 21 women, at least two of whom had died since the marriage [to him]. The fact that he was married or sealed to an additional 19 women in 1846, the year he departed from Nauvoo to lead the exodus, added an overwhelming personal burden to his already immense public one. A glimpse of the challenge he faced in trying to care for his family while at the same time shepherding the exiled Saints across the plains is seen in surviving Church and family records.

When Brigham left Nauvoo with 15 wagons on February 18, 1846, to begin the migration west, 50 family members accompanied him.⁹ The enumeration of the camp of Israel on March 27 at the Chariton River in Iowa reveals that among those traveling in the Young company were 11 of his wives, Mary Ann

Angell's six children, five other children from two of his wives' previous marriages, and a handful of other relatives.¹⁰

According to prior arrangement, several of his wives traveled with their own parents or friends, while others remained in Nauvoo to come later. Eliza R. Snow, who had married Brigham Young in fall 1844, left Nauvoo on February 13, 1846, with the Steven Markham family and with them traveled across Iowa to the Missouri River. Along the journey west, she saw her husband on only rare occasions.

Among those unable to leave Nauvoo with Brigham was Harriet Cook, who had given birth to an infant son (Oscar Brigham) just a few days before her husband's departure. And Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, who also remained behind, "had not means to go with the church, in fact, we could hardly get enough to eat."¹¹ Other plural wives who were unable to leave Nauvoo with Brigham were Julia Foster Hampton, Mary and



One More River, by Glen S. Hopkinson

Margaret Pierce (Margarett Peirce), Elizabeth Fairchild, Augusta Adams Cobb, and Mary Ann Powers.

Emily Dow Partridge was caring for an infant child (Edward Partridge Young, one of the first born in plural marriage) when she started the exodus west. Emily recalled being cold, hungry, and lonely, wandering from one campfire to another to obtain food and shelter. When the Brigham Young company left Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, on June 2, 1846, she and another plural wife, Zina D. Huntington, remained there to assist the Huntington family. They were not able to join the rest of Brigham's family at Winter Quarters until the following spring just before Brigham left to go farther west at the head of the pioneer company. Even though reflecting upon her lonely plains experience [years later] still brought tears, Emily explained that her husband was responsible for "the welfare of the whole people" and therefore "had not much time to devote to his family."¹²

Nevertheless, Brigham's correspondence during that [period] reveals his anxiety for those left behind and his efforts to find ways for them to join the rest of the family. For example, on March 15, 1846, he wrote to Harriet Cook: "Br. J. B. Noble will see that you are provi[d]ed for to come comfort[a]ble, and I want you to com with him. . . . I expect Br. Babbitt will get a good caredge or wagon and team for you and others. Br Noble will get a good man to drive it. It is likely Br. John Young and Even Greene, Sister Fanney [Young] and others of my frends will come at the same time. I want you to see Sister [Mary Ann Clark] Powers and have hir watch hir opertunity

. . . and start with some one that will bring hir a peace [sic] with spead. . . .

"I want you to see Sisters Mary and Margret Pears [Pierce], Br Robert Pears daughters and see if their Father is [coming]. If not get them along with you if you can. Br. Noble will bring the sister that is there. Sister Betsy [Elizabeth] Fairchilds [I] wish you could bring. Give my love to them all. I want to see you and the little Boy. Tell Sister Augusta Cobb I hope she will be blest. I want [to] see hir again. . . . Be cherful and of good coraige Sister Harriott we shall soon meet again."¹³

The exodus uprooted families and upset routines. The Saints had to depend upon one another to ensure the safety and welfare of each individual in the community. On the trek west, Brigham Young functioned as a father to all the Saints. Doing as much as he could for as many as he could, Brigham, in turn, had to rely on the assistance of others to care for many of his own wives and children until the Saints had all arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. ▮

Daguerreotype of Brigham Young with Margaret Pierce.



The Family Provided For



Settlement in the Salt Lake Valley brought much-needed security to Brigham Young's family. There he gathered many of the scattered wives and children together. As a colonizer, Brigham Young was the moving force behind the founding of more than four hundred settlements in the American West.

At the center of this domain was his own family enclosure, entered through a large gate

crowned with an eagle and surrounded by a high adobe wall on the north side of Salt Lake City. To care for his family,

Brigham built what could be described as a village within a city. This family complex eventually consisted of three residences, an office building, school, store, carpenter shop, shoe shop, blacksmith shop, carriage house, barns, a wood storage house, swimming pool, gardens, and orchards. As his family grew and their needs



*Brigham Young's
backyard by Danquart
Anthon Weggeland*

increased, he provided homes for some of them at other locations in Salt Lake City, Provo, and St. George.

When Brigham arrived in the Salt Lake Valley for good in fall 1848, a central objective was the care and comfort of his wives and children. Since the number of his wives and children had increased drastically in the recent years, he embarked on an ambitious building program to care for them. He selected for the settlement of his family an area east of the temple block. He established his wife Mary Ann Angell and her children in a storage building that later became “the corn crib” before he completed in 1851 a more substantial living space known as “the white house on the hill.” He moved his younger wives and their children from the Old Fort (located in present-day Pioneer Park) to the Log Row, an L-shaped structure consisting of a long living room at the west end and five rooms in a row with openings to the north. Meals for the family in that home were served

in a common living room; a large brick oven was located a few steps from the door. The living room also served for a time as the meetinghouse for the Saints who lived in the upper part of the city, while Brigham Young’s office occupied one corner of that room. At this early time, two other wives lived in three wagon boxes mounted on a stationary trellis adjacent to the Log Row. Another wife, Margaret Pierce, was housed in an upper room of a building that later became the milk house, which stood near the Log Row; she was living there when her son Brigham Morris was born in 1854.

In a two-room adobe house west of the lot where the Lion House was later built, Brigham housed another two of his wives and his second eldest daughter. Upon completion of the White House, Mary Ann Angell resided there with her family, and it became a place where Brigham Young entertained visitors.

The block directly east of the temple was designated for Church purposes and included structures such as the tithing offices and the President’s office. However, for convenient access

Clara Decker



*“social mentor”
for the children*

Margaret Pierce



*talented cook
and housekeeper*

Lucy Bigelow



*economical manager
and first-class cook*

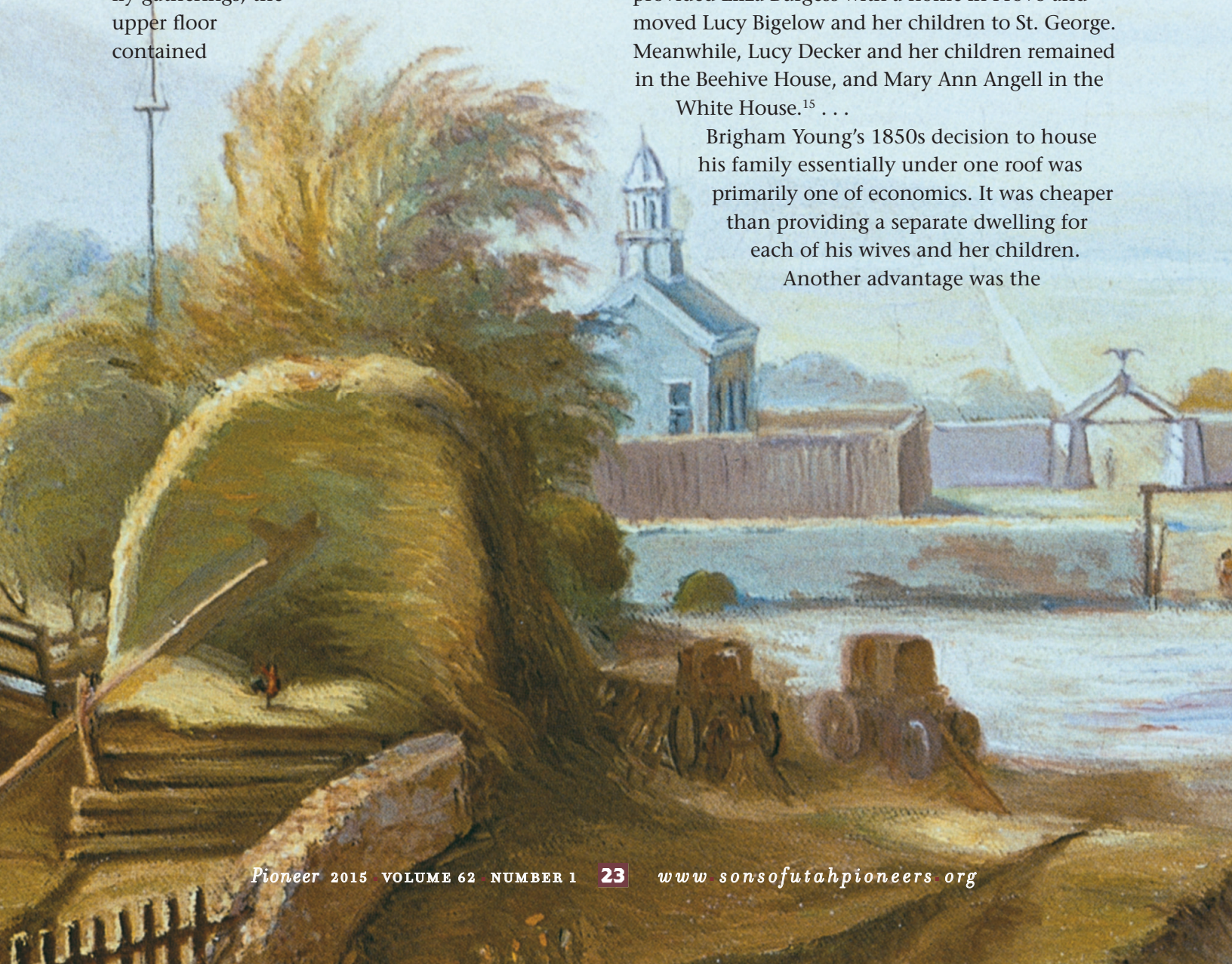
to Church affairs and to his family, Brigham built on this block his official residence, the Beehive House, where Lucy Ann Decker, Brigham's first plural wife, was the primary resident. On the west side of his office he built the Lion House, a long three-floor stone building with a 10-gable roof commenced in 1854 and completed in 1856. It became the home for his 12 other living wives who bore children and for a few who were childless. The lower floor contained a kitchen, a long dining room that accommodated from 50 to 80 people at a meal, and a schoolroom, where one of the wives, Harriet Cook, taught the children of the family and where recreational activities were carried out during winter months. The main floor consisted of nine sitting rooms or apartments for wives with young children and a large parlor for family gatherings; the upper floor contained

20 bedrooms occupied by childless wives and older children.

For about 15 years, most of the family lived in the Lion House. But as the children multiplied and grew, Brigham built or bought separate homes for most of his wives.¹⁴ First he provided a home nearby on State Street for Emily Partridge and her seven children, who later occupied a two-story residence on Fifth East. Then he provided homes for the various wives at different locations: Emmeline Free and her family of 10 slightly south on Main Street; Zina Huntington on Third South; Clarissa Decker on State Street near the Social Hall; Harriet Barney on South Temple near the temple gates; Mary Van Cott on South Temple across from Temple Square; and Susan Snively at the Forest Farm located in the current-day Forest Dale area of Salt Lake City. He provided Eliza Burgess with a home in Provo and moved Lucy Bigelow and her children to St. George. Meanwhile, Lucy Decker and her children remained in the Beehive House, and Mary Ann Angell in the White House.¹⁵ . . .

Brigham Young's 1850s decision to house his family essentially under one roof was primarily one of economics. It was cheaper than providing a separate dwelling for each of his wives and her children.

Another advantage was the



bonding and opportunities for interaction it provided for the entire family. Everyone benefitted from the skills of the individual wives. For example, Zina Huntington served as a schoolteacher, midwife, and doctor. Clara Decker was regarded as a trusted friend, confidant, and “social mentor” for the children, a friend who “could wink at all kinds of youthful derelictions” and who had uncanny influence with Brigham Young when youthful interests were at stake. Zina Huntington, Eliza Snow, and Lucy Bigelow were regarded as the “spiritual props and guides” of the family. Lucy Bigelow and Susan Snively, a childless wife who raised an adopted child, made butter and cheese for the entire family from their residence at the Forest Farm.¹⁶ Margaret Pierce, a talented cook and housekeeper, managed the domestic chores for the workers at the gristmill, later the site of Liberty Park. Another of the childless wives was a widow, Naamah Twiss,

“an economical manager and first class cook,” a stern, no-nonsense woman who for many years managed the Lion House kitchen and dining room with two hired cooks and two dishwashers. She ran a very tight ship so far as mealtimes and children eating between meals were concerned—an important asset for a family of that size living in such close quarters. And Clara Decker and Lucy Bigelow served as the nurses for Brigham when he was ill and presumably for other family members as well.¹⁷

With most of his wives and children under one roof, Brigham Young employed laborers to the benefit of the entire family. Brigham’s daughter Susa pointed out that, while her father was a “devout believer” in work, “he had seen his invalid mother bedridden for years, and his own cherished first wife was an invalid for four sad years and then died in his arms. These memories made

Zina Huntington



Eliza R. Snow



Lucy Bigelow



“spiritual props and guides”



Brigham Young property from Council House, ca. 1865.

him exceedingly careful of women. He guarded the physical strength and health of his wives and daughters as second only in importance to that of their spiritual welfare." She concluded that for this reason he hired men to do the heaviest work and "always kept some strong girls in the kitchen who were glad and willing to earn good wages at the housework."¹⁸

Along with the advantages of having his family concentrated mostly under one roof, Brigham's plan also had drawbacks. For one thing, in the case of his daughters, it did not allow the training in household and domestic skills that could have been provided in more conventional households without hired help and with less specialization of labor. Susa Young noted that the daughters for the most part were "pretty giddy and gay. None of them did anything out of the way especially, but they . . . wanted nothing but fun and frolic. I think that they would have been better raised and indeed father said so himself, if each wife had had a home of her own and had brought up the girls in all the science of housekeeping, arts and labors. But having no particular kitchen work to do and going to school always, we wasted a good deal of the rest of our time in useless frolic. Of course it was more economical to have us together and it cost a good deal you may be sure to feed and clothe from fifty to seventy-five people."¹⁹

Another possible drawback of concentrating the family under one roof was the increased potential for discord among the different wives and their children. Yet apparently such friction was rare. Born in 1856, the year the Lion House was finished, Susa witnessed the occupants of the home through the eyes of a child with many older siblings and many "aunts." By age 14, she saw the family mature and the wives move with their children to separate dwellings, culminating with her departure with her own mother to St. George in 1870. From her perspective, written later in her life, the home was not a place of contention and division: "I never heard one of my father's wives correct another woman's child, much less strike it, in all my life. And certainly, never did I hear my father's voice raised in anger or even in reproof to

one of his wives. I never saw him whip one of the children and I don't know that he ever laid his hand upon one of his daughters in my life, unless to spank a child, perhaps when it was really needed on some sudden occasion."²⁰

Susa recognized that a potential for tension existed within the Young household. But self-discipline seemed to prevent open display of conflict. She saw her father's wives as "women of strong character, powerful wills. . . . I do not say that even I, as a child loved all my fathers wives alike. Some of them were queer even sarchastic and a few of them I had only respect for. . . . I have often said that I never heard a quarrel between my father's wives in all my life. They may have had words with each other, I suppose they did have on occasions, but at least they had the decency and dignity to keep such differences from the ears and understanding of their children."

She concluded her assessment with the observation "Were it not for their religious convictions, which informed and inspired every waking hour of their lives we would have had chaos instead of peace, constant bickering and hatred in place of comparative harmony and love." The family unity and cohesiveness meant that there were no "half-brothers" and "step-sisters," just brothers and sisters, and "their mothers were indeed 'Aunts' . . . and we loved them all, some better than others."²¹

Nevertheless, the brood was not above occasional acts of juvenile meanness. Susa recalled one of her brothers who "took keen delight in torturing little girls and animals," promising her "a little red box with five nails in it" if she would use her natural agility to steal some apples across a high fence. Upon doing so, she was felled by a slap to the head, followed by the comment, "I have given you the little red box on the ear with my five finger nails in it."²² . . .



The Isabella Park Kenner Story

The following excerpts appeared in the March 1930 issue of the Instructor and were taken from an interview of historian Harold H. Jenson with Isabella Park Kenner:

Here is a pioneer story that sounds too good to be true, yet the facts speak for themselves, for Isabella Park Kenner, a Pioneer actress of the old Salt Lake Theater days, holds the distinction of being possibly the only woman who ever took President Brigham Young to a Leap Year ball. . . .

"I am not going to tell you my age, for personally I think that is my own business; but I will tell you a true pioneer story. My father was Hamilton G. Park and my mother Agnes Steele, and he, being an early day educator, gave us children every opportunity. I was particularly fond of dramatic art, music and dancing. I remember the dedication of the Salt Lake Theater, even though I was just a little girl. My parents took me. This gave me my first incentive for appearing on the stage.

"Some of the boys working for the *Deseret News* conceived the idea of getting up a show of their own and they called their organization 'The Thespians.' . . . A Frenchman traveling through stopped long enough to act as their first stage manager and coach. . . . The first play was 'Luke the Laborer.' Another was 'The Dutchman's Boot.' Finally, we became more ambitious and gave Shakespeare's 'Richard III.' John T. Caine and Hiram Clawson happened to hear about us and finding we were well patronized came to see our performance. They were on the lookout for new talent for the 'Big Theater.' . . .

"Brother Caine and Brother Clawson selected him and a few of us for the 'Big Stage' as we called it. I played one of the witches in 'McBeth' as my first appearance there. Finally they gave me 'Madame De Dom Blue' and I wore for this part a pink velvet dress and spoke several lines. Critics said of my work in a review that 'Miss Park has considerable talent, and will make a mark.' . . .



See photos at familysearch.org

"While on the subject of the Salt Lake Theater, let me say President Brigham Young kept alive interest in dramatic art by lending every effort to it. Particularly was he careful to see that all the young ladies in the company were properly escorted home at night. Often he sent his private carriage for us, and many a time put it at the disposal of a visiting star. Often he would drop in at rehearsals and lend an encouraging word. To him great credit is due.

"The Social Hall is also dear to my memory, for here is where the real thrill of my life occurred. A leap year ball was to be given there, and the ladies of

Salt Lake had to escort the gentlemen and no wife was allowed to take her own husband. The committee consisted of Mrs. Joseph A. Young, Mrs. Brigham Young, Jr., Mrs. Amelia Folsom Young, Mrs. Charlotte Cobb, Mrs. William C. Staines and Mrs. Hamilton Park, my mother. They met in our parlor to plan the event. I heard them, after much consideration, say that Nellie Colebrook, who had just returned [from the] east and had gained popularity as a celebrity, would be the logical lady to escort President Young. In fact, they were in quite a quandary as to who should have this honor. They decided they would go as a committee and escort her to President Young. Tickets were to sell at \$5.00, with extra gent 35 cents.

"From devilment or, I know not why, all of a sudden a mad desire seized me to ask President Young myself. I rushed out of the door and went to the Lion House, cutting off through the orchard, running as fast as my young legs could carry me. I arrived breathless at the door and Mrs. Lucy Young met me, and said, 'What can I do for you Belle? you look like you must have something important on your mind?'

"'I have,' I responded, 'I must see President Young immediately.'

"She ushered me in and the President said, 'Well Belle,' for he knew both me and my parents well, 'what can I do for you?'

"'I have come to invite you to the Leap Year Ball,' I answered.

"'Well Lucy,' he said, 'I've heard a lot about this ball and concluded I was going to be a wall flower. Bring your carriage young lady to my door and I will be ready.'

"The night of the ball arrived. Everyone was wondering who would be President Young's partner, as he had firmly but politely stated in response to all inquiries, he had already accepted an invitation.

"We had no carriage, so President Young came with his. He asked my mother if she also was ready and who mother would be taking. She replied Brother Park, my father. Mother answered he would not go with anyone except her. 'Well, leave him home, then,' the president replied. At last, as an extra gent was allowed, he took my parents, who were speechless to think of what I had done, but they said nothing.

"You can imagine the feelings of a seventeen year old girl with this honor of escorting the president. I had never before worn kid gloves and said to President Young that I had never worn them, and was hoping he would suggest I didn't need to. He replied 'Put them on; you must learn to wear them if you are to be a lady.' I did and enjoyed the evening of my life. All eyes were focused on us and the most surprised were the committee in charge. Brother Golightly was the chief for all Social Hall affairs and served an elaborate banquet, as, in those days, dinners shared equal honors with the dance. The wee small hours saw the close of the festivities, with President Young escorting both me and my parents home and thanking me for a very pleasant evening. He had learned what I had done to thwart the committee, yet he wisely said nothing. Several ladies had brought two or more gentlemen, so father felt better about it.

"This was not the case with my mother, for as soon as I was home, a juvenile court started. The party had been a big success and this, coupled with the fact of my youthful age, made forgiveness

an easy matter with the rebuke I must never do it again and I promised I never would. I received a good scolding and the committee held an indignation meeting, but mother smoothed things over.

"Later I attended many balls, and President Young often joked about the young lady who had courage to do what she did.

"I attended ward schools in my youth and later my father's school held where the Deseret News building now is. My early marriage cut short my stage career, but I was not sorry for my husband, Scipio Africanus Kenner, and my children doubly repaid me for my sacrifice. I think a career is a good thing, but marriage is greater, for when one is old she can look back on one with joy while often on the other with only regrets."

The writer must close with a personal visualization of the parting picture of this good old lady, who, in saying good-bye, picked a flower and put it in his button hole, with the statement "it is better to give the flowers before rather than after." There is a lot of truth in this statement.

The perfect day ended with the last rays of the sun kissing the petals of the flowers in this old fashioned garden and reflecting a halo around the silver head of this Thespian of other days. When the final curtain falls for her it can well be said she played her part well and will justly deserve the praise that shall follow a useful life in devoting her talent for the service of others. ▮



Sketch by Minerva Teichert

Kindness Shown

to family and friends

The expressions of love and commitment to God and his kingdom that surface in the correspondence between Brigham and his children suggest that something extraordinary must have taken place in his home to produce those feelings. . . . Numerous letters to Brigham from family members during their absence from home contain statements such as these:

“My confidence, esteem, and love, can be three times estimated, First by the undying and unbounded confidence I have in your mission as a Prophet of God, bearing the Holy Priesthood. Second, by the duty I owe to an able, faithful leader of a Great People. Third, by the warmest affection that burns within my heart for a beloved Father.”²³

“I cannot help thinking how much you have done for me and all the children, and how little we have repaid you for all your kindness. I feel I can never repay the great debt I owe you.”²⁴

“I know the deep interest you feel for your children’s welfare. . . . I have always felt grateful for having been blest with a father who always inspired me with perfect confidence, who always felt so jealous a care for my well-being, and who always set so worthy an example for me to follow.”²⁵ . . .

And from one of Brigham’s wives who accompanied the pioneers to Salt Lake Valley in 1847: “I can sit down and let my thoughts wander back to Winter Quarters and fancy I see you surrounded by your family enjoying their sweet society and they yours. . . . Your kindness to me the past summer will never be forgotten it shall live while memory lives with me.”²⁶ . . .

The traits revealed in these phrases are contrary to the popular image of Brigham Young characterized by the inherently aggressive symbol of the Lion on the portico of his home. . . . At least where his family was concerned, Brigham Young was quite the opposite. . . .

Those who knew him and observed him at close range commented on his patience and kindness. His daughter Clarissa, for example, wrote that “no child ever loved, revered, and cherished a father more than I did mine. . . . Each day of my childhood stands forth in my memory as one long round of happiness.”²⁷

Brigham Young’s close associates used his behavior at home as a model for others to follow. Lorenzo Snow, who had close personal contact with Brigham Young and his family, urged the seventies in 1857 to “arm yourselves with all the power of God you can get in order



to save your families.” . . . As an example, he referred to Brigham Young: “Go into his house & take lessons. See him with his great family of wives & Children & see the God like Character & example of that man & the order which he manifests in his family. . . . They all respect him & obey his law for the wisdom of God is with him. Now brethren strive to bring yourselves to the same standard.” He concluded, “Almost any fool can go & preach the gospel but it requires a vary wise man to be a patriarch & save his own household.”²⁸

Brigham Young outlined his standard in an 1860 discourse: “. . . I have a large family of children, many of them small, and yet I do not think that you ever saw even four children in one family live together with so little contention. Watch them, and their conduct will prove that there is a good spirit influencing them. . . . You may ask how I manage to bring about this result. I seldom give a child a cross word; I seldom give a wife a cross word; and I tell my wives never to give a child cause to doubt their word. A child loves the smiles of its mother, but hates her frowns. I tell the mothers not to allow the children to indulge in evils, but at the same time to treat them with mildness. . . . Children need directing and teaching what is right in a kind, affectionate manner.”²⁹

President Young’s children . . . also saw the way he extended his kindness to widows, orphans, and others of limited circumstance as if they were his own kin. Jemima Angell Valentine, whose husband had died, leaving her with several children, was among the disadvantaged Brigham took into his family to support and provide for. In 1866 she wrote him, “I wish to hold you in reverenc & true respect as a Man of God & a good kind Father to my children for you have ben a good kind friend to me & may the Lord bless you for ever.”³⁰

Heber J. Grant, whose father died when he was eight days old, spent much time in the

Young household in his early years. Later in life, he wrote to Brigham Young’s daughter, “Never have I known a man more kind and loving to his children, and those of the saints generally, than was your father. . . . When I think of your father and his kind love for me and my brother Brigham F [Grant] I could easily write another ‘continued story.’”³¹

Heber’s brother, Brigham Frederick, after the death of their father, was left with his grandmother and later was placed in a foster home, from which he ran away to work in the mines in Montana. He eventually returned to Salt Lake City and was working in a coal yard when Brigham Young learned about him and sent for him: “The president greeted B.F. with ‘a father’s handshake,’ and learned what he had been doing. When Brigham offered him easier work—a job in one of his stores—B.F. replied, ‘I haven’t got sense enough to work in a store—I can’t read or write.’ ‘Tears rolled down the president’s cheeks,’ wrote B.F. as he remembered the interview. ‘He took out his handkerchief, wiped them off, and said: “My boy, come and live with me. I will give you a home, clothe you, and send you to school. You can work during the vacation for me.”’

“B.F. accepted the offer and remained with the president’s family for two years. He reported that there were six other orphaned boys and girls living in the family at that time, and he, for one, was ‘a real member of the family.’”³²

The fact that additional acts of kindness can be documented in obscure sources suggests that Brigham Young’s benevolence was probably more extensive than we will ever know. In a newspaper published in Hailey, Idaho, an immigrant woman whose husband was employed by Brigham wrote that after they were married by the President they lived for several months in Brigham’s household. “I will say,” she noted, “that during the time my husband and I were under that roof we never heard Brigham Young raise his voice in anger. He was kindly to everyone within his home.”³³ . . . ▼

Mothers' Responsibilities

in child rearing

What did Brigham Young do to inspire the feelings of devotion and loyalty that are frequently expressed in writings of family members? The origins of such sentiments cannot be ascribed solely to Brigham Young. During an era when Church responsibilities coupled with the demands of colonizing and building new settlements took fathers from their homes frequently and for extended periods of time, much of the responsibility for nurturing the minds as well as the bodies of the children rested upon their mothers. The respective responsibilities of the father and mother in the rearing of children was not defined in the same terms as it was for a later generation of Latter-day Saints living in more decadent social conditions.

Brigham's pointed remarks . . . illustrate the emphasis of that time: "What faults do I discover in my neighbors' families? I can see their women go off visiting, riding on horseback, attending parties, while their little ones are neglected, and left to run at large in the streets, exposed to the pernicious examples of vile company. Hear it again! The blood of these

wicked children will be required at the hands of their mothers! Should your husbands be called out to fight the Indians, or go to the islands of the sea to gather the poor, it is none of your business, when it is their calling to be away from home.

"I want education to commence here. I wish you strictly to follow out this principle, and when children are old enough to labor in the field, then the father will take them in charge. If children are not taught by their mothers, in the days of their youth, to revere and follow the counsels of their fathers, it will be hard indeed for the father ever to control them."³⁴ . . .

"Mothers, remember that when your husbands are engaged in the service of the Church, and are all the time occupied in the duties of the Priesthood, so that they have not time to instruct their children, the duty devolves upon you. Then bring your children up in the ways of truth, and be to them both a father and mother, until they are old enough to perform duties by the side, and under the immediate eye, of their father."³⁵ . . .

By this standard, much of the devotion and good will reflected in the writings of Brigham Young's children can be attributed to the "splendid women" whose religious convictions for the most part "informed and inspired every waking hour of their lives."³⁶ . . . ▣

Sunflowers
and Buffalo
Chips by
Gary L. Kapp

Guidelines Established

Precise rules regulated many aspects of life in the Lion House, including daily family prayer, school attendance, and Sabbath-day conduct. Mealtimes and the hours for arising and retiring followed a regular schedule. Card playing was strictly forbidden, as were “games of chance that encouraged or suggested gambling in any form.” Checkers and chess provided enjoyable entertainment but were not permitted on Sunday; neither were secular reading, secular music, and “roaming the hills.” The outer gates of the stone wall around the Lion House were locked each night at 10:00 pm. Children out later than that gained access to their quarters only through the office door and faced the prospect of being reported by the watchman.³⁷

Susa recalled that her father “could be very stern . . . and he maintained the utmost discipline in the family.” The only time she ever saw her father strike a child was when her baby sister became unruly during prayer time one evening. After the child twice disrupted the devotional by “running about . . . screaming with laughter,” Brigham interrupted his prayer, got up, caught her, spanked her lightly, laid her sobbing in her mother’s arms, then returned to his knees and finished the prayer.³⁸

He occasionally exercised a firm hand with the older children. One Sunday night during the courting years of the older girls, eight or ten couples had gathered in the parlor of the Lion House to enjoy each other’s company. To increase their sense of privacy, they had darkened the room somewhat by slightly turning down the lamp and stacking books around it. A short time later the door opened, and the stout figure of Brigham Young

emerged. Setting his candle on the table, he unstacked the books and dismissed the girls to their rooms with the announcement that he would say good night to the boys.³⁹

Although strict rules and occasional stern measures were necessary to maintain order and stability in his home, Brigham Young did not rule with an iron hand. . . . “If the Lord has placed me to be the head of a family, let me be so in all humility and patience, not as a tyrannical ruler, but as a faithful companion, an indulgent and affectionate father, a thoughtful and unassuming superior; let me be honoured in my station through faithful diligence, and be fully capable, by the aid of God’s Spirit, of filling my office in a way to effect the salvation of all who are committed to my charge.”⁴⁰

“Kind looks, kind actions, kind words, and a lovely, holy deportment towards them, will

Right: monument located at 194 East 1st Avenue, SLC, Utah.




bind our children to us with bands that cannot easily be broken; while abuse and unkindness will drive them from us, and break asunder every holy tie, that should bind them to us, and to the everlasting covenant in which we are all embraced. If my family, and my brethren and sisters, will not be obedient to me on the basis of kindness, and a commendable life before all men, and before the heavens, then farewell to all influence.”⁴¹ . . .

“Kindness, love, and affection are the best rod to use upon the refractory. . . . I can pick out scores of men in this congregation who have driven their children from them by using the wooden rod. Where there is severity there is no affection or filial feeling in the hearts of either party; the children would rather be away from father than be with him.” . . .

Using his own experience to illustrate, Brigham taught the Saints: “My children are not afraid of my footfall; except in the case of their having done something wrong they are not afraid to approach me. . . . I could break the wills of my little children, and whip them to this, that, and the other, but this I do not do. Let the child have a mild training until it has judgment and sense to guide it. . . . It is necessary to try the faith of children as well as of grown people, but there are ways of doing so besides taking a club and knocking them down with it. . . . There is nothing consistent in abusing your wives and children.”⁴²

Brigham Young could counsel the Saints . . . on overcoming passion and anger because he had largely conquered these passions himself. He suggested that the Saints put a piece of India rubber in their mouths when they became angry and bite it until they could get control of themselves: “If you will keep your thoughts to yourself when you are angry they will not become the property of another.” He added, “Any person who is acquainted with me knows that I have Controll over myself. I do not





Speak in anger to my wives, children or the people. I make all my Passions be in subjection to the priesthood & the spirit of God.”⁴³

“There is not a father who feels more tenderly toward his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people, and my Father in heaven loves them; my heart yearns over them with all the emotions of tenderness, so that I could weep like a child; but I am careful to keep my tears to myself.”⁴⁴ . . .

Limited as he was in the time he could spend with his family, Brigham Young sought to make those occasions meaningful, quality experiences . . . [including] daily evening prayer, a ritual akin to family home evening for a later generation of Latter-day Saints. At about seven o’clock each evening, Brigham would ring the prayer bell to call his family to the large sitting room on the main floor in the Lion House. “No matter what we were doing or who was there, we dropped everything” and assembled for prayer, wrote a daughter. In addition to prayer, events of the day were discussed, “golden words of wisdom” were uttered, plans made, family policies reviewed, and sometimes “there were juvenile troubles to settle, with father as judge of the Juvenile Court.”⁴⁵ . . .

Brigham found it necessary in 1866 to remind his family members of their daily obligation: “There is no doubt but that my family, one and all, will acknowledge that my time is as precious to me as theirs is to them. When the time appointed for our family devotion and prayer comes, I am expected to be there; and no public business, no matter how important, has been able to influence me to forego the fulfillment of this sacred duty which I owe to you, to my self and my God.” . . .

[However, Brigham] observed that at prayer time only a portion of his family might be present: “My wives are absent visiting a sister, a neighbor, a mother or a relative; my children

are scattered all over town, attending to this and that; and if at home, one is changing her dress, another her shoes, another getting ready to go to the theatre; another has gone to see Mary, and another to see Emily, and I may add, etc., etc., etc.” He concluded with a “few words of counsel” that he expected his family to “receive kindly, and obey”: when prayer time came, everyone must be at home “ready to bow down before the Lord to make their acknowledgments to Him for His kindness and mercy and long-suffering towards us. . . . Your strict attendance . . . will give joy to the heart of your Husband and Father.”⁴⁶ . . .

Early one evening after the Church Historian called to see him, the President cut off the discussion and excused himself, remarking that “the hour for praying with his family had arrived.” Brigham Young commented that he “always thought it would be of great benefit to his family . . . if he set the example to pray punctually with them.”⁴⁷ Another time, on a day when it was impossible for the Church leader to meet with his family at the appointed hour, he sent his son Brigham Jr. to the Lion House “to attend prayers for him.”⁴⁸

An eyewitness described the sense of urgency Brigham Young exhibited in the devotional hour. George A. Smith and his wife Bathsheba arrived at the Young home at prayer time. George A. reported that “after a very fervent prayer” Brigham addressed his family on the importance of living exemplary lives: “He said, the eyes of the world were upon them, also the eyes of the Saints. The influence of his teaching was affected by [his family’s] example.” He also urged his family to live the Word of Wisdom and his wives and daughters to be examples in their dress, and “as far as possible to manufacture what they wore.” When he finished, his wife Mary Ann followed with an “interesting address,” and George A. and Bathsheba Smith “bore testimony.”⁴⁹ ▼

Left: rural road in Willard, Utah by C. R. Savage.

Education *and* Recreation



Another binding element in the Brigham Young home grew out of his concern, not only for the spiritual welfare of his family, but for the development of their social and intellectual needs as well.

He believed: “When parents whip their children for reading novels, and never let them go to the theatre, or to any place of recreation and amusement, but bind them to the moral law, until duty becomes loathsome to them; when they are freed by age from the rigorous training of their parents, they are more fit for companions to devils, than to be the children of such religious parents.” Therefore, he assured his listeners, “My little children . . . shall go to the dance, study music, read novels, and do anything else that will tend to expand their frames, add fire to their spirits, improve their minds, and make them feel free and untrammelled in body and mind.”⁵⁰

During the early years of Brigham’s married life, poverty, extensive periods of absence from his family, and disruptive conditions among the Saints limited the opportunities for social, recreational, and educational pursuits. Available sources pertaining to his pre-Utah years reveal little about the day-to-day activities of his children. His 13-year-old daughter Vilate studied music in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1843–44, where she learned to play the piano, but otherwise there appear to have been few exceptional cultural or educational opportunities for his children outside of the home.

After the family was established in Utah, one of Brigham Young’s concerns was the education and training of the youth. Addressing the legislature in 1852

in his capacity as governor of the territory, eager to build a thriving community, he lamented that he scarcely knew of apprentices in Utah in any trade—“no young mechanics arising to fill the places of those now at labor, when they shall have gone to their rest.” He added, “Deplorable indeed must be the situation of that People, whose sons are not trained in the practice of every useful avocation, and whose daughters mingle not in the hum of industry. . . . It well becomes us to give the proper direction to that labor.”⁵¹

For Brigham, the responsibility to educate lay squarely with parents. Thus, Brigham spared no effort to provide for his own children’s education. When the school-teaching facilities in the lower floor of the Lion House became inadequate for his family, he built a family schoolhouse and recruited the German educator Karl G. Maeser as tutor because he wanted the children to be “better schooled than they can be by schoolmistresses.”⁵²

Brigham Young’s interest in education extended beyond the rudiments. After the University of Deseret reopened in 1867, his older children filled many of the desks. Records show that in the two-year period 1869–71 the Church leader spent more than \$1,500 on tuition for 46 members of his household. He hired private tutors in French, shorthand, and music for “any and all of his children



Artwork by Arnold Friberg

"We had horizontal ladders and straight ladders, horizontal bars, back boards to straighten our shoulders and make us walk upright, jumping ropes, wands, hoops, roller skates, wooden swords, dumbbells, swings, and big balls to kick and roll about."



who cared to avail themselves of this privilege."⁵³ In addition to local schooling, he gave his children who so desired the opportunity of studying professions of their choice at educational institutions in the East. Four of his sons did so. Comparatively few colleges were open to women at that time, and it was not expected that young women would be sent away to school, but at least six of his daughters did attend local academies and colleges.

Brigham also addressed his family's needs for physical exercise and recreation. After completion of the Lion House in 1856 when most of his family were living there, Brigham built porches along the

west side, where "every contrivance" of that day was available for physical exercise. "We had horizontal ladders and straight ladders, horizontal bars, back boards to straighten our shoulders and make us walk upright, jumping ropes, wands, hoops, roller skates, wooden swords, dumbbells, swings, and big balls to kick and roll about," recalled Clarissa. Instructors were hired to teach gymnastics, fencing, and solo dancing. As a result, his daughters were in demand as dancers after the opening of the Salt Lake Theater in 1862. In addition to these forms of exercise, a family swimming pool was built, fed with water from a nearby canyon stream. Summarizing their recreational activities, Clarissa noted that "besides all the fun we had we gained poise and developed fine, strong bodies."⁵⁴

*On January 23, 1865,
Brigham visited
Feramorz Little's place
of entertainment in
Salt Lake City with
23 of his daughters to
celebrate one of their
birthdays.*




Brigham Young's daughters, ca. 1865.

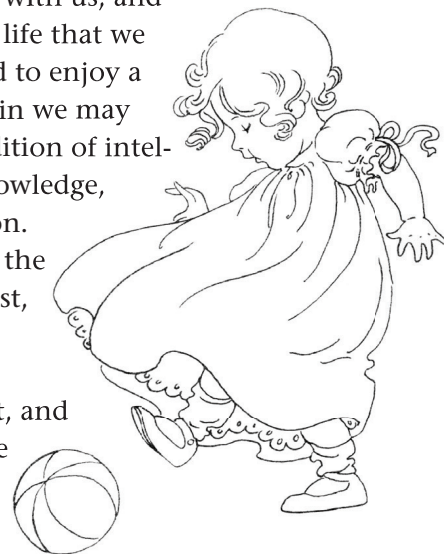
For Brigham Young, deviation from strict daily routine was an important part of life: "Our work, our every-day labor, our whole lives are within the scope of our religion. This is what we believe and what we try to practice. Yet the Lord permits a great many things that He never commands. I have frequently heard my old brethren in the Christian world make remarks about the impropriety of indulging in pastimes and amusements. The Lord never commanded me to dance, yet I have danced; you all know it, for my life is before the world. Yet while the Lord had never commanded me to do it, He has permitted it. I do not know that He ever commanded the boys to go and p[l]ay at ball, yet He permits it. I am not aware that He ever commanded us to build a theatre, but He has permitted it, and I can give the reason why. Recreation and diversion are as necessary to our well-being as the more serious pursuits of life."⁵⁵

In keeping with this conviction, Brigham found time to participate occasionally in a variety of social and recreational activities with his family. Reports have him taking his family to the Tabernacle to hear the organ, dancing with them to celebrate the New Year, and taking them to the territorial fair. Moreover, holidays and birthdays offered a break from the strains of everyday work. On three holidays in July 1863—the Independence Day celebration on the fourth, the Mormon Battalion Reunion on the sixteenth, and the Pioneer Day party on the twenty-fourth—Brigham and his

daughters danced all night at the theatre. And on January 23, 1865, he visited Feramorz Little's place of entertainment in Salt Lake City with 23 of his daughters to celebrate one of their birthdays.⁵⁶

Susa Young related that her father was "so understanding in the vagaries of the child heart" and solicitous of his children's "childish needs in education, amusement and social ways" that they all loved him, and even though he was too busy to spend time with them on a daily basis he was their "hope and delight" at mealtime, prayer time, and on holidays.⁵⁷

For Brigham Young, recreation played an integral role in fulfilling the purposes for which mortals were created. His motto for the Latter-day Saints was not that they "prepare to die, . . . but prepare to live is the word with us, and improve all we can in this life that we may be the better prepared to enjoy a better life hereafter, wherein we may enjoy a more exalted condition of intelligence, wisdom, light, knowledge, power, glory, and exaltation. Then let us seek to extend the present life to the uttermost, by observing every law of health, and by properly balancing labor, study, rest, and recreation, and thus prepare for a better life."⁵⁸ 



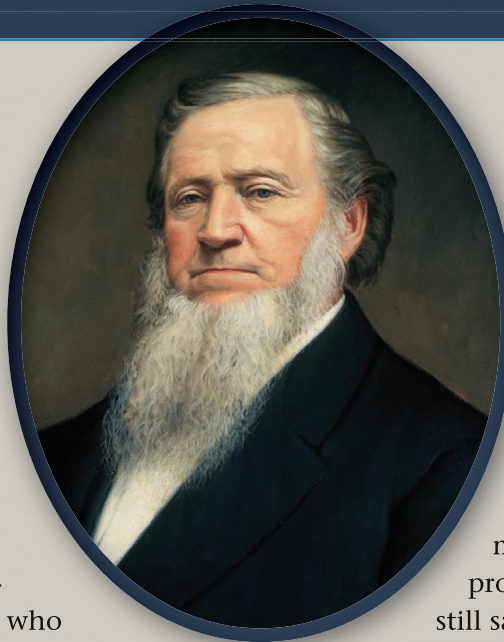
Confidence in God

never wavering

More than anything else, the guiding force behind Brigham Young's commitment and dedication as a parent was his faith in the overruling providence of God. After his conversion to Mormonism, religion motivated his every act and colored everything he saw and did. None who knew Brigham were ignorant of what was important in his life.

He declared: "I am proud of my religion. It is the only thing I pride myself in, on the earth. I may heap up gold and silver like the mountains; I may gather around me property, goods, and chattels, but I could have no glory in that, compared with my religion; it is the fountain of light and intelligence; it swallows up the truth contained in all the philosophy of the world, both heathen and Christian; it circumscribes the wisdom of man; it circumscribes all the wisdom and power of the world; it reaches to that within the veil. Its bounds, its circumference, its end, its height, and depth, are beyond the comprehension of mortals, for *it has none*."⁵⁹

An authority on child behavior has noted that for children to increase their faith in God "they need to hear their parents render unto him that which is his. . . . Parents who themselves are filled with the consciousness of God's hand in all things will transmit this



feeling to their children."⁶⁰ Brigham Young's children had ample opportunity to cultivate this perception.

Even when circumstances as unhallowed as what Brigham called "that interminable alimony outrage" pressed upon his mind in the wake of divorce proceedings by a plural wife, he still saw the hand of God. Brigham

Jr. reported visiting his father one day as the case was being adjudicated and finding him "in excellent spirits[,] confident in God and willing to submit to his providences." He noted that his father had just paid \$3,000 to lawyers in the case "and [he] assures me that he will pay the [\$]9,500 alimony if necessary without any fuss. He said the Lord has given me all I have. If He permits this why should I complain?"⁶¹

Brigham reminded his son Willard, who was serving in the military: "Our daily toil, however humble it may be, is our daily duty, and by doing it well we make it a part of our daily worship. But, whatever be our labor, calling, or profession, we should hold our skill, knowledge, and talents therein, subservient to the accomplishment of the purposes of Jehovah, that our entire lives, day by day, may be made to praise Him, and our individual happiness secured by the consciousness that we are fulfilling the purpose and design of our presence here on the earth."⁶² ▼

Oval: Brigham Young, by John Willard Clawson.

Heartache Suffered

As diligent as he was in his role as family patriarch and kingdom builder, Brigham's home life was not without sorrow and heartache. . . . With a family the size of Brigham Young's, the usual activities and complexities of life were multiplied. Illness and death were no strangers in pioneer homes and certainly not in his. In 1856, for example, 17 of his children and one foster child were ill with measles.⁶³

Furthermore, Brigham witnessed the death of 20 of his wives and 14 of his children. Three of his wives died at a young age and their surviving children were raised by the other wives. There were other complexities. The challenge of raising teenagers never seemed to diminish. At the age of 67, Brigham had 22 teenagers in his home: 16 girls and 6 boys. Even something as seemingly simple as nightly supper was no easy affair. Susa Young recalled that, with their family, hired men and girls, orphans, and other unfortunate persons whom her father took into his home and cared for, "we often sat down in the dining room with 80 [people] at the table."⁶⁴ . . .

In addition to the anxiety associated with illness and death, some of his wives left him and not all of his children adhered to the teachings of their father. After his death, the settlement of his estate brought disunity and discord, which no doubt would have caused him much sorrow. The wrangling over the estate bespoke of deeper problems. On the seventh anniversary of his death, in 1884, one of his sons lamented, "Seven years ago was a dark day for my father's family. At the present writing there are some who have squandered the hard earnings which he left them, and are, worst of all infidel to the Gospel. I will not name them for they may see the error of their ways and I cannot perpetuate their unfaithfulness."⁶⁵

But whatever heartache may have transpired in Brigham's bosom due to waywardness of some

in his family, he was buoyed by his faith in the mercy and justice of God. "I learned a long time ago," he reportedly said, "not to die because my children go wrong. It has been revealed to me that every child and descendant will come to me some time, somewhere. What causes me great sorrow, however, is to know what some of them will have to go through before they get back."⁶⁶ ▣



Conclusion

Few men have approached the realm of family responsibility on a more complicated level and with greater devotion and insight than did Brigham Young. “I can say that I am not prepared to bring up a child in the way he should go,” he remarked toward the end of his life, “and yet I probably come as near to it as any person that lives.”⁶⁷ Considering the ecclesiastical and secular responsibilities of his life, it is hard to comprehend just how he managed to provide such a high level of care and comfort for a family as large as his. Together, his many responsibilities carried a potential for extreme stress that could have easily spawned anger or violence in a lesser person. But through it all, Brigham Young maintained a level of composure that was a hallmark of his personality. He not only provided food and shelter for his family but effectively imparted the values of his faith through precept and example.

As Susa Young concluded: “No other fact of father’s life was so profound a proof of his true nobility and greatness as his life at home and the influence which he radiated there. He was ever present in spirit. . . . The world knows Brigham Young as a statesman and colonizer; but to his children he was an ideal father. Kind to a fault, tender, thoughtful, just and firm. . . . None of us feared him; all of us adored him. . . . What his life and love meant to his family only their subsequent lives may testify.”⁶⁸

In the privacy of his children’s own homes, in their own relationships, in the lives of his 40,000 descendants, and in the precepts and example he left for generations to follow, the parental legacy of Brigham Young would live on. ▢

Dean C. Jessee, BYU professor emeriti, is with the Joseph Smith Papers Project. The author thanks Jeff Johnson, former Church archivist, for providing some of the details on Brigham Young’s wives and family.

1 Historian’s Office, Journal, Jan. 31, 1857, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City [hereafter cited as CHL].

2 Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 420–21. Jeffrey Ogden Johnson, “Wives of Brigham Young,” ms, copy in author’s possession. Johnson includes Amanda Barnes among Brigham’s wives. By comparison, Heber C. Kimball had 43 wives and 65 children.

3 As cited in Arrington, *American Moses*, 324.

4 Jeffery Ogden Johnson, “Determining and Defining a ‘Wife’: The Brigham Young Households,” *Dialogue* 20 (fall 1987): 57–70; Arrington, *American Moses*, 420–21; Dean C. Jessee, *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 357–59.

5 As cited in Dean C. Jessee, “Brigham Young’s Family: The Wilderness Years,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 4 (summer 1979): 475.

6 *Journal of Discourses*, 3:266, July 14, 1855 [hereafter cited as *JD*].

7 See Dean C. Jessee, “Brigham Young’s Family: Part 1,” 1824–1825,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 3 (spring 1978): 319–20; and Ronald O. Barney, “Letters of a Missionary Apostle to His Wife: Brigham Young to Mary Ann Angell Young, 1839–1841,” *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 178.

8 Brigham Young to Mary Ann Young, Aug. 17, 1843; April 20, 1847; Minutes Collection, Feb. 16, 1847, all in CHL; Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young* (New York: Macmillan, 1830), 340.

9 Johnson, “Brigham Young Households,” 65–68; John D. Lee, Journal, Feb. 15, CHL

10 “Record of the Organization of the Camp of Israel Which Took Place at Shariton Ford, I[owa] T[erritory] on Friday, March 27th and Monday 31st 1846,” CHL.

11 Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, *Autobiography and Diary*, 25, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

12 Emily Dow Partridge Young, *Diary and Reminiscences*, typescript, 3, CHL. See also Jessee, “Brigham Young’s Family: The Wilderness Years,” 475–500.

13 Brigham Young to Harriet Young, Mar. 15, 1846, CHL.

14 Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 350.

15 Susa Young Gates, “How Brigham Young Brought Up His 56 Children,” *Physical Culture*, Feb. 1925, 138; Clarissa Young Spencer and Mabel Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1940), 64–86.



16 Forest Farm was a large plot of ground located on the south side of what is Twenty-First South and Highland Drive and State Street in Salt Lake City.

17 Susa Young Gates, "Brigham Young and His Nineteen Wives," Susa

Young Gates Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City; Gates, "How Brigham Young Brought Up His 56 Children," 140.

18 Susa Young Gates, "Brigham Young as I Knew Him," Gates Papers.

19 Susa Young Gates, "My Recollections," Gate Papers.

20 Gates, "My Recollections."

21 Gates, "My Recollections."

22 Gates, "My Recollections."

23 John W. Young to Brigham Young, April 2, 1875, BY Office Files.

24 Willard Young to Brigham Young, May 22, 1875, BY Office Files.

25 Willard Young to Brigham Young, Dec. 25, 1876.

26 Clara Decker Young to Brigham Young, Oct. 3, 1847, BY Office Files.

27 Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 16–17.

28 Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal. 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenny (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983–84), 5:15–16, Feb. 2, 1857.

29 *JD*, 8:74, April 22, 1860.

30 Jemina Angell Young to Brigham Young, Aug. 15, 1866, BY Office File.

31 Heber J. Grant to Susa Young Gates, Dec. 30, 1899, CHL.

32 Arrington, *American Moses*, 338.

33 Sophia Brasse, as quoted in Claudia L. Leach, "A Bit of History Loaded with Human Interest," *Wood River News-Miner* (Hailey, ID), Feb. 4, 1918.

34 *JD*, 1:68, April 8, 1852.

35 *JD*, 2:21, July 24, 1854.

36 Gates, "My Recollections."

37 Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 336–37; Gates, "How Brigham Young Brought Up His 56 Children," 141.

38 Susa Young Gates, "My Father as His Forty-Six Children Knew Him," Gates Papers; Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 355.

39 Gates. "Brigham Young as I Knew Him."

40 *JD*, 9:307, June 15, 1862.

41 *JD*, 10:358–65, Nov. 6, 1864.

42 *JD*, 9:195–96, Feb. 9, 1862.

43 Young, as cited in Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:7 (Jan. 11, 1857).

44 *JD*, 1:49, April 9, 1852.

45 Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 31; Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 333–34.

46 Brigham Young to his family, April 2, 1866, CHL.

47 Historian's Office, *Journal*, Dec. 23, 1863.

48 Brigham Young Jr., *Diary*, Jan. 21, 1867, Brigham Young Jr. Collection, CHL.

49 Historian's Office, *Journal*, May 25, 1870.

50 *JD*, 2:94, Feb. 6, 1853. For further discussion of Brigham Young's views on novel reading, see Richard H. Crockett, "'Cows to Milk Instead of Novels to Read': Brigham Young, Novel Reading, and Kingdom Building," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 2 (2001): 102–31.

51 Brigham Young, Address to the Utah Legislature, Dec. 13, 1853, CHL.

52 Brigham Young to Karl G. Maeser, May 20, 1865, CHL.

53 Susa Young Gates, "From Impulse Girl to Patient Wife: Lucy Biglow Young," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (summer 1977): 282. This posthumous was written many decades earlier.

54 Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 29–30.

55 *JD*, 13:60–61, July 18, 1869.

56 Historian's Office, *Journal*, July 12, 1857, Dec. 31, 1859; Oct. 2, 1862; Jan. 23, 1865; George A. Smith to John L. Smith, July 30, 1863, CHL.

57 Gates, "My Father as His Forty-Six Children Knew Him."

58 *JD*, 11:132, Aug. 1–10, 1865.

59 *JD*, 1:39, July 11, 1852.

60 Elliott D. Landou, "How to Teach the Ten Commandments to Your Children," *Ensign* 3 (Oct. 1973): 52.

61 Brigham Young Jr., *Diary*, Mar. 12, 1875.

62 Brigham Young to Willard Young, Nov. 11, 1875, in Jessee, *Letters of Brigham Young*, 191.

63 Arrington, *American Moses*, 171.

64 Gates, "Brigham Young as I Knew Him."

65 Brigham Young Jr., *Diary*, Aug. 29, 1884. For further discussion of the issue, see Leonard J. Arrington, "The Settlement of the Brigham Young Estate, 1877–1879," *Pacific Historical Review* 21 (Feb. 1952): 1–20; and Arrington, *American Moses*, 422–30.

66 Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 370.

67 *JD*, 14:193, June 3, 1871.

68 Gates and Widstoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 355–56.

Brigham Young Family Memorial Cemetery

MONUMENTS & MARKERS



of President Young; and a monument depicting Brigham seated on a bench, reading the scriptures with two children.

Grave of Brigham Young

Inscription reads: Grave of Brigham Young, prophet–pioneer–statesman. Born June 1, 1801, at Whitingham, Vermont. Died August 29, 1877, at Salt Lake City, Utah. Brigham Young, second President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, succeeded Joseph Smith, founder of the Church, who was martyred at Carthage, Illinois. He was chosen as leader of the people in 1844 and sustained as President of the Church December 27, 1847. Earlier that year

he led the Mormon pioneers from Winter Quarters (Omaha) to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving here July 24. In 1849 he became governor of the provisional state of Deseret, and in 1850 governor of the territory of Utah. This tablet erected in honor of their beloved leader by the Young Men's and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Associations, which were organized under his direction. *Erected June 10, 1938.*



Brigham Young
birthplace marker
located in
Whitingham,
Vermont.

Location: 194 East 1st Avenue, one-half block east from the midway point on the block that contains the Church Office Building and the Beehive House. The cemetery originally overlooked Brigham Young's homestead and the valley he helped settle. President N. Eldon Tanner rededicated this site as a memorial park on June 1, 1974, the 173rd anniversary of Brigham Young's birth.

Monuments throughout the park include plaques honoring the Latter-day Saint hymn "Come, Come, Ye Saints," by William Clayton and Eliza R. Snow's hymn "O My Father."

Sculptures include one by Edward J. Fraughton honoring the six thousand pioneers who lost their lives crossing the plains between 1847 and 1869; a bust

Brigham Young Historic Park

Southeast corner of North Temple and State Street.

Brigham Young Monument

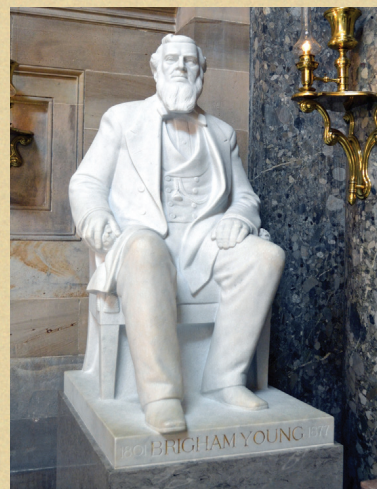
North sidewalk of the intersection at Main and South Temple.

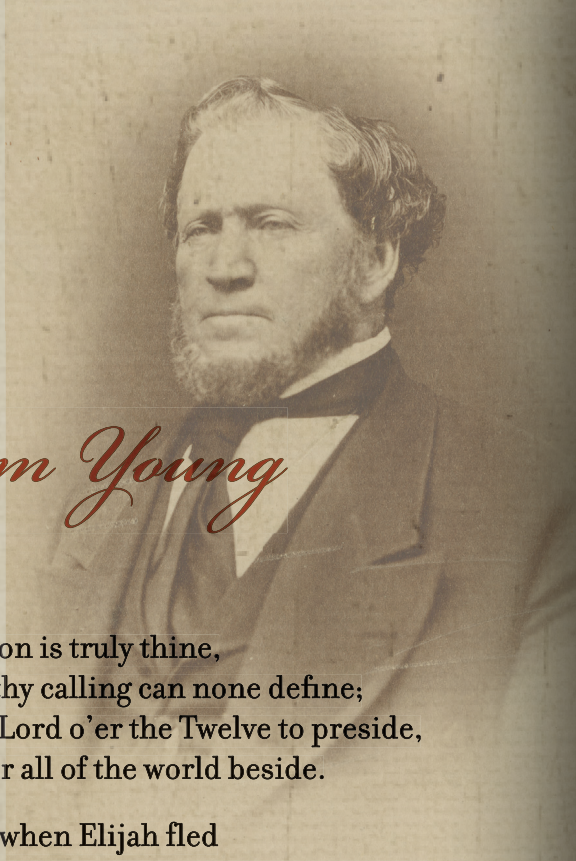


This monument was first displayed at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Afterwards it stood briefly on Temple Square, then was transferred centering the intersection of Main and South Temple streets in 1897 until 1993, when it was moved a few yards north to its present location.

The National Statuary Hall Collection

in the United States Capitol building includes a statue of Brigham Young given to the collection in 1950. Sculpted by Mahonri Young—sculptor of the **"This is the Place Monument."**



A sepia-toned portrait of Brigham Young, a man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark bow tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

PRESIDENT

Brigham Young

By Eliza R. Snow

An important station is truly thine,
And the weight of thy calling can none define;
Being call'd of the Lord o'er the Twelve to preside,
And with them over all of the world beside.

Like Elisha of old, when Elijah fled
In a chariot of fire, thou has lost thy head;
Lost thy head? O no! thou are left to prove
To the Gods, thy integrity, faith, and love.

Thou hast gain'd, like Elisha, a rich behest,
For the mantle of Joseph seems to rest
Upon thee, while the spirit and pow'r divine,
That inspir'd his heart, is inspiring thine.

The great work which he laid the foundation to
Is unfinished, and resting on thee to do—
With thy brethren, the Twelve, thou wilt bear it forth
To the distant nations of the earth.

Kings, princes, and nobles will honor thee,
And thy name will be great on the isles of the sea—
The pure light of intelligence thou wilt spread
Will exalt the living and save the dead.

The great spirit of truth, will direct thy ways;
Generations to come, will repeat thy praise—
When they work is completed on earth, thou'lt stand
In thy station appointed at God's right hand.

The Prophet, VI N47, 12 FEBRUARY 1845, P. 4

